

Nov - January - 108257
1992-1999

Israeli warplanes raid southeast Lebanon

RASHAYA (R) — Israeli warplanes raided suspected positions of the resistance group Hizbollah in southeast Lebanon late on Friday, but there were no reports of casualties, a security source said on Saturday. He said the Israeli planes fired two rockets at Wadi Zelayah village in the eastern Bekaa Valley, just north of Israel's south Lebanon occupation zone. Lebanese army troops in the area fired anti-aircraft guns at the planes, the source added. The raid was Israel's 86th on Lebanon this year. In retaliation, Hizbollah activists attacked positions of the pro-Israeli South Lebanon Army (SLA) in Ahmadiya, in the eastern section of the occupation zone. Hizbollah (Party of God) and other Muslim groups are waging a war of attrition to oust Israeli troops and their SLA local allies from the 15-kilometre-deep zone in south Lebanon.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراي

Lawyer demands interest payments for Saddam son-in-law's heirs

AMMAN (AFP) — A Jordanian lawyer threatened Saturday to take a bank here to court if it does not hand over \$60,000 in interest to the heirs of one of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's son-in-laws, assassinated in 1996. Lawyer Luai Al Dabbas told AFP he was intending to start legal procedures with Jordan Gulf Bank if it does not pay \$60,000 in interest to Saddam Kamel Hassan's heirs — his widow Rana (Saddam Hussein's daughter) and their children who are still minors. Dabbas said Saddam Kamel had deposited over \$1.2 million in two Jordanian banks — \$730,000 in Jordan Gulf Bank and \$496,000 in a branch of ANZ Grindlays. The lawyer, who is representing Rana, said Grindlays handed over the total sum of Saddam Kamel's account to a Jordanian court four months ago along with \$37,000 interest, while Jordan Gulf Bank only transferred the account balance.

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Jordan will not allow any actions to impede implementation of Wye Accord, Tarawneh stresses after meeting Arafat

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh Saturday denied the presence of bases, leadership or representation of Hamas in Jordan, stressing that Jordan does not allow any one to impede or act towards changing the Washington agreement between the Palestinians and Israel which Jordan supports.

In statements to journalists after a brief visit to Ramallah and talks with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat about the peace process and the recent Palestinian-Israeli agreement concluded at Wye River, Tarawneh noted that Jordan has its own interests in the agenda of the final status negotiations, adding that Amman will coordinate with the Palestinians and other parties about these interests.

He said Jordan will continue to coordinate with the Palestinians in final status negotiations about the question of refugees, since Jordan hosts the major part of them, as well as question of water, borders and Jerusalem.

Tarawneh said Jordan recognises the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and continues to support the organisation in its ongoing negotiations to regain the Palestinian people's rights.

The leadership of the Palestinian people has returned to the Palestinian lands, secured the restoration of a major part of the occupied territories, contributed towards the opening of Gaza airport, struggled to open the seaport, acts towards linking the West Bank with Gaza and is seeking the release of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails, he said.

Tarawneh and Arafat underlined the fact that the two sides are working in full coordination at all levels.

Tarawneh conveyed to the Palestinian president the full support of His Majesty King Hussein and HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, in his endeavours to regain the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in their homeland and congratulated him on the success of the talks that ended with the signing of an agreement at the White House in Washington.

Arafat expressed the Palestinian people's appreciation of and gratitude to King Hussein for his contribution to the peace process in general and his efforts at the Wye River talks in particular.

Arafat briefed Tarawneh on the Palestinian plans to implement the Washington agreement as of Monday. Tarawneh and Arafat discussed the implementation of the minutes of talks of the higher Jordanian-Palestinian committee held in Amman recently and reviewed Jordanian-Palestinian cooperation in different fields.

Tarawneh expressed Jordan's readiness to do all that it could to promote cooperation between the Jordanian and Palestinian people.

He said that the Palestinian leadership's determination to regain Palestinian rights has won them appreciation and support of the U.S. and the world community.

Jordan, the prime minister said, is keen to enhance coordination with the Palestinian side and is ready to help in the implementation of the agreement so as to pave the ground for the final status negotiations that would lead to the restoration of the Palestinian people's rights. He added that what the Palestinian leadership has obtained in the Washington agreement is a source of pride for Jordan and its people.

Arafat said that he reviewed economic and trade issues with Tarawneh and discussed ways for promoting cooperation in this field.

Tarawneh said that there are numerous outstanding issues which concern trade, traffic, transportation via the bridges over

the River Jordan, joint investment and others, noting that the Palestinian National Authority is importing more Jordanian cement: 180,000 tonnes

since the beginning of 1998 compared to 100,000 tonnes for the same period of last year.

He added the Washington agreement is bound to contribute towards increasing trade and economic cooperation for the benefit of the people on the two banks of the River Jordan.

That time Baghdad relented following a deal brokered by Russia.

Then eight months ago it took the intervention of U.N. chief Kofi Annan to resolve a dispute over access to Iraqi presidential sites that prompted London and Washington to threaten military strikes.

The relationship began to deteriorate again in August when Baghdad suspended cooperation with intrusive inspections, but allowed permanent monitoring to continue. The Security Council branded that decision "totally unacceptable" and on Sept. 9 cancelled regular two-monthly reviews of the sanctions, in effect indefinitely extending the embargo.

The Iraqi leadership's latest move was quickly criticised by both Britain and France.

"If this reported decision is confirmed it will be total-



Palestinian President Yasser Arafat walks hand-in-hand with Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh as he arrives at Arafat's headquarters for a meeting in the West Bank town of Ramallah on Saturday (AP photo)

PNA to use Aqaba port

AMMAN (AP) — Jordan has agreed to allow the Palestinian National Authority to use the Red Sea Port of Aqaba for imports, an agriculture ministry official said Saturday.

It will be the first time that the authority will import goods through Aqaba. Jordan's port 350 kilometres south of Amman. Hashem Shbouh, the ministry's secretary general, said the agreement, which takes

effect immediately, was reached in talks with Palestinian officials on Thursday in Gaza.

Shbouh said the Palestinians were mainly interested in importing livestock and dairy imports through Aqaba.

He said the Palestinians would also import Jordanian dairy products without paying duty.

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At meeting with Arab MKs: Regent underlines need to boost ties with Arab Israelis

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Saturday reaffirmed Jordan's commitment to strengthening ties and cooperation with the Palestinian Arabs of Israel.

Addressing a delegation of Arab members of the Israeli Knesset (parliament) at a meeting at the Royal Court, the Regent underlined the importance of the role of Arab Israelis towards consolidating peace and asserting the Arab and Islamic identity in historical Palestine.

Spokespersons for the delegation expressed their delight over reports on His Majesty King Hussein's positive response to treatment, voicing their wishes for his speedy recovery and safe return home.

They also expressed appreciation of King Hussein's significant role towards the agreement in the Palestinian-Israeli talks at Wye River despite his health condition.

The Regent thanked the delegation for their feelings towards King Hussein and said: "It would like to reassure the Arab people of Israel and all those who love King Hussein that he is responding very well and in a very reassuring manner to the treatment and exercising his responsibilities towards peace as was displayed at the Wye River talks."

At the meeting which was attended by the Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Sa'd Hayel Srouf, deputies and other officials, the two sides discussed measures for further

consolidating contacts between Jordanians and Arab Israelis.

Referring to the Washington agreement, Prince Hassan said the agreement constitutes a positive step that requires support from various parties, stressing the need for the implementation of the provisions of that agreement in accordance with its timetable.

"Any gain by the Palestinians is a gain for the Arab Nation which demands the restoration of the Palestinian people's rights on their national soil," the Regent said.

Prince Hassan called for joint action towards achieving further progress in the peace process in order to arrive at a comprehensive peace that guarantees the rights of all concerned parties.

The Arab members of the Knesset, who represent five political blocs, said they fully back the agreement since they consider it a significant achievement for the Palestinian people. The delegation who had earlier met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat pledged they will support the agreement when it is up for voting at the Knesset and they will monitor the Israeli government's moves towards its implementation.

The members of the delegation criticised "those groups who they said try to outbid the Palestinian people" without offering any help towards enabling Palestinians to regain their legitimate rights.

Prince Hassan said that it was important for avoiding empty slogans and adopting serious, quiet and objective action in dealing with political issues and in helping the Palestinian people.

After the meeting Prince Hassan told journalists accompanying the delegation that there was need for supporting the agreement and redeployment of Israeli forces in the Palestinian territories and promoting the Palestinian Arab identity on their national soil.

Referring to the King's role in the agreement, Prince Hassan said that the King at Wye River "had displayed great courage and high morale and we are all yearning for his return home safely."

In reply to a question about the opposition to the agreement on the part of certain factions, Prince Hassan said: "We hope not to see any unilateral actions from any party that would derail us from the basic objective at the present historic turning point."

Prince Hassan said the U.S. is throwing its full weight behind the Wye River agreement "and we expect the major world powers and the Arab states to reaffirm their commitment towards peace. Our concern at the moment is the implementation of that agreement."

The Regent expressed hope that talks and consultations among Arabs, Palestinians, Israelis and Americans will continue for the implementation of the agreement.

PNA continues crackdown, approves Wye agreement

RAMALLAH (AP) — Cracking down on activists and ratifying the new Mideast peace accord, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) is hoping to curtail any chances of a delay in implementing the latest land-for-security deal with Israel.

However, two days of sweeping arrests were followed Saturday by the unexpected release of two activist leaders.

After a late night cabinet meeting Friday, Tayeb Abdul Rahim, said that the Palestinian cabinet had discussed an Israeli demand

for the arrest of a senior figure in the Islamic Hamas group.

Rahim, an aide to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat also confirmed that the home of Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin had been raided and several arrests made.

However, two activists were turned free Saturday. Ismail Hanieh, a senior Hamas activist was released after being held two days. Reached by a reporter on his mobile phone, Hanieh said he was out of jail and would not discuss his case.

A Palestinian police official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that Nafez Azam, a senior figure in the smaller Palestinian Islamic Jihad group had also been released. Azam's arrest was part of an initial crackdown after the group burned American flags at a rally in Gaza Oct. 24.

The official gave no reason for the releases.

Israel has accused the PNA of a revolving-door policy of rounding up activists and then releasing them without punishment.

(Continued on page 12)

Baghdad halts all cooperation with UNSCOM

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq halted all cooperation with the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) on disarmament of Iraq on Saturday, demanding the dismissal of the top weapons inspector and a lifting of the eight-year U.N. embargo.

In the first such move despite years of tension with the disarmament body, the Iraqi leadership said it has "broken off all cooperation with UNSCOM and its chief and stopped all its activities in Iraq, including the 'monitoring operations' as from today [Saturday]."

The move sparked Britain, the current chair of the U.N. Security Council, to announce a meeting of the world body later Saturday.

The head of the Iraqi body charged with liaising with U.N. weapons inspectors, General Hussam Mohammad Amin, spelled out the leadership's decision in a

meeting with the head of the U.N. inspection mission in Baghdad, Nils Carlstrom.

The decision to cut all cooperation "does not include a request for the inspectors to leave Iraq nor a decision to expel them," a government spokesman told reporters.

The decision "also does not include a request to stop the functioning of cameras and other specialist equipment" used by UNSCOM for permanent monitoring of suspect sites in Iraq, the spokesman said.

Iraq also made clear that its latest move "does not concern the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) which can continue its activities... on condition that they are totally independent from those of UNSCOM."

The IAEA, which also forms part of the Baghdad Monitoring and Verification Centre headed by Carl-

strom, is responsible for dismantling Iraq's nuclear weapons programme, while UNSCOM is charged with destroying its chemical, germ warfare and long-range missile capabilities.

In New York, U.N. spokesman Fred Eckhard confirmed that Amin had formally notified Carlstrom of the Iraqi decision, which was taken at a joint meeting of the Revolutionary Command Council and the ruling Baath Party leadership chaired by President Saddam Hussein.

Iraq's move to end cooperation came just one day after the Security Council reached agreement on a letter aimed at persuading it to resume it after an earlier decision to suspend intrusive inspections.

The letter reassured Iraq about the council's intention to proceed with early implementation of a "comprehensive review" of

Iraq's compliance with its obligations under the sanctions regime imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

But the Iraqi leadership said that was not enough and that its decision to halt cooperation would remain in force until the Security Council examined its "right to a lifting of the embargo."

Baghdad also repeated long-standing demands for the sacking of UNSCOM chief Richard Butler and the restructuring of the body he heads.

Despite UNSCOM's tense relationship with Iraq since its creation in May 1991, this is the first time it has halted all cooperation.

Iraq has regularly blocked weapons inspections by both UNSCOM and the IAEA and in October last year expelled all UNSCOM members who were U.S. nationals, sparking the departure of all U.N. teams.

That time Baghdad relented following a deal brokered by Russia.

Then eight months ago it took the intervention of U.N. chief Kofi Annan to resolve a dispute over access to Iraqi presidential sites that prompted London and Washington to threaten military strikes.

The relationship began to deteriorate again in August when Baghdad suspended cooperation with intrusive inspections, but allowed permanent monitoring to continue. The Security Council branded that decision "totally unacceptable" and on Sept. 9 cancelled regular two-monthly reviews of the sanctions, in effect indefinitely extending the embargo.

The Iraqi leadership's latest move was quickly criticised by both Britain and France.

"If this reported decision is confirmed it will be total-

ly unacceptable," said a spokesman for the Foreign Office in London which has generally joined Washington in taking a tough line with Baghdad.

But Britain's reaction was echoed by France, which has tended to join China and Russia in taking a more lenient line.

"France deeply deplores Iraq's decision to break off cooperation with the Special Commission which it had partly suspended on Aug. 5," said government spokeswoman Anne Gazeau-Secret.

"This decision is made all the more regrettable by the fact that the Security Council, acting on the suggestion of the secretary general, has just agreed to review Iraq's approach to its obligations, once it resumes cooperation."

Main points of Iraqi statement

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Here are the main points of the statement from the Iraqi leadership, who on Saturday broke off all cooperation with the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) charged with dismantling Iraq.

The statement, entitled "The lifting of the embargo — a great patriotic, national and humanitarian mission," was broadcast by Radio Baghdad.

"Iraq conformed to the Security Council's resolutions, even though they are unjust and without precedent in the history of international relations, and despite all the sacrifices and bitterness they entailed, in the hope that the unjust embargo imposed on its people would be lifted."

"Only this bitter experience has proven that America and its agents are aiming to harm Iraq and Arab Nations, even against the resolutions it adopted and international law. Iraq has shown much flexibility, patience and diplomacy... but the unjust embargo was not lifted."

"The events of this year have unmasked two other dangerous truths."

Firstly, the American lies with regard to the presidential sites which almost led to a destructive war. But when the truth was unmasked in front of the whole world, no justification was asked from America for its lies and there was no move towards lifting the embargo. Secondly, the filthy role played by UNSCOM and its chief, coordinated by America, concerning the allegations

(Continued on page 12)

Iran denies contacts with Germany over fate of convicted nationals

TEHRAN (AFP) — Tehran denied on Saturday that it had held any contacts with Bonn over the fates of a German condemned to death here and an Iranian jailed in Germany.

"Tehran denies any negotiation with Bonn on the link between Helmut Hofer, a German jailed in Iran, and Kazem Darabi, an Iranian jailed in Germany," Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi said.

"Hofer's case is a judicial case and only Iran's judiciary is qualified to decide," he told the official Iranian news agency IRNA.

"Iran is opposed to politicising this case and has repeatedly told German authorities that efforts in some circles in Germany to politicise it will only further complicate the matter," Mohammadi added.

An Iranian MP, Mohammad Alavi, said Thursday that Tehran and Bonn were in contact over the fates of Hofer and Darabi.

"The two countries are having contacts over these issues. It is natural for

each country to be interested in the problems of its citizens," he said.

German businessman Helmut Hofer was sentenced to death in January for having an affair with a Muslim woman and is awaiting a final verdict on his appeal from Iran's supreme court after the sentence was upheld by another court earlier this month.

The death sentence, which once again marred relations between Tehran and Bonn, came just as the two governments were recovering from the German verdict in the case of Iranian Kazem Darabi.

Darabi was sentenced to life in prison by a Berlin court in April 1997 for the 1992 murder of four Kurdish dissidents. During the trial the Iranian regime was implicated in the assassinations.

Alavi, a member of the parliament's foreign policy committee, said the new German government should "distance themselves from the insulting verdict issued by the Berlin court."

"As long as German justice adheres to this verdict and does not make up for the insult, it is natural that Iran will not forget the insult," Alavi said, adding that the commission on Wednesday discussed "future relations" with Germany.

Alavi was the first Iranian official to link the fates of Darabi and Hofer, although some newspapers have done so.

"We believe the new German rulers will not act against their country's national interests and risk losing a good trading partner like the Islamic Republic," he said.

Earlier this month the Iranian News warned that Iran does not feel obliged to intervene to secure Hofer's release because Bonn refused to help when the Tehran regime was in the dock in Germany last year.

The paper had earlier called on Germany's new chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, to help free Darabi to pave the way for better relations.



IRAQI GUARDS UNITED NATIONS HQ IN BAGHDAD: An Iraqi soldier Saturday talks on a two-way radio while guarding the United Nations building in Baghdad. Iraqi informed the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) it was suspending all cooperation with arms inspectors until the Security Council reviews the lifting of sanctions and purges its teams of 'American spies and agents' (Reuters photo)

Egypt worried about Wye because of settlements

SHARM AL SHEIKH (AFP) — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said on Saturday he was pessimistic about the future of the peace process because of Israel's continued settlement policy in Palestinian territories.

"After the signing of the accord we were cautiously optimistic but now we are cautiously pessimistic," he told journalists, referring to the Wye River land-for-security deal signed by Israel and the Palestinians eight days ago.

"If this [settlement] policy continues on the ground, the peace process will be reduced to nothing," he said, adding that Egypt supported Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's position on settlements.

Arafat said Israel's plans for further building in Jewish settlements were a violation of the Wye River accord.

Iranian students to tone down protests marking seizure of U.S. embassy

TEHRAN (R) — Iranian students are to burn an Uncle Sam puppet instead of the U.S. flag in annual rituals marking the seizure in 1979 of the American embassy in Tehran on Monday, a student leader said on Saturday.

Students said burning a puppet instead was less provocative than the flag-burning featured in previous anniversary rituals, and that they were making the switch to stay in line with President Mohammad Khatami's policy towards the United States.

"Since Mr. Khatami has put forth the notion of 'dialogue between civilisations'... and since the flag is a symbol for American people, this year we will burn a puppet representing world arrogance and Zion-

ism," said Maysam Saeedi, a leader of Iran's biggest student group Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat.

"World arrogance" has been the usual name for the United States and other big Western powers in Iranian political discourse since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

The student group has called on Tehran residents to join a rally on Monday to commemorate Nov. 4, 1979 — the day militant students stormed the U.S. embassy in Tehran.

The theme of this year's rally, however, will be noticeably different from past events.

A poster for Monday's rally read: "How to bring down the wall of mistrust?" — echoing Khatami's words in a January

television interview in which he called for dialogue between Iranian and American peoples.

"We have no problems in having relations with any country save Israel which we do not recognise... We will not have any problem with America if it releases our frozen assets, observes respect for our nation and does not apply double standards," Saeedi told a news conference.

"The seizure of the embassy was a demand of our people. If we are to resume ties with America, it should be based on the people's demand," Saeedi asked American students and academics to try to "reform their statesmen" by encouraging them to release themselves from the "Zionists' influence."

First visit to Cyprus by Israeli head of state

NICOSIA (AFP) — President Ezer Weizman begins on Monday the first official visit to Cyprus by an Israeli head of state amid continuing concern among Greek Cypriots about the Jewish state's military cooperation with Turkey.

Weizman's three-day visit to the east Mediterranean island comes hot on the heels of a visit to Ankara to take part in Thursday's 75th anniversary celebrations for the Turkish Republic.

"We are waiting to see what he has to say to allay our concerns about the military cooperation agreement with Turkey," said Cyprus Foreign Minister Yiannakis Casoulides.

"But we won't stop being concerned and we are not the only ones to think that the balance of power in the region should not be tipped in favour of any particular

country."

Since February 1996 Israel has signed a series of military cooperation accords and held joint exercises with Turkey, which still maintains 35,000 troops in Cyprus's northern third.

"The military cooperation agreement is not against any third party and definitely not the friendly people of Cyprus — that was confirmed by many high-ranking officials including [former prime minister Shimon] Peres and [current Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu," insisted Israeli ambassador Shemi Tzur.

He said the Israeli president's visit was intended to cement the improvement in ties since the launch of the Middle East peace process.

Although Israel has maintained an embassy here since 1961, Cyprus, which has maintained good relations

with the Arab World, only opened an embassy in Tel Aviv in 1995.

"This opening brought tremendous achievements in the field of business, tourism, health and cultural exchanges," the ambassador said.

Trade expanded from just \$38 million in 1992 to \$158 million in 1997, while the tourist arrivals grew from between 5,000 and 12,000 before 1992, to 158,000 last year, he said.

The fact that both Weizman and Cypriot President Glafcos Clerides were both former members of Britain's Royal Air Force also meant they had a "personal friendship."

Cyprus has been divided since 1974 when Turkey invaded its northern third following a Greek-Cypriot coup in Nicosia seeking union with Athens.

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Ecuador extradites suspect to Egypt'

CAIRO (R) — Ecuador has handed over to Egypt a man suspected of being one of the masterminds of the massacre in Luxor last year of 58 foreign tourists and four Egyptians. Egyptian state television said on Saturday, "President Mubarak revealed that Ecuador detained and turned over to Egyptian authorities one of the planners of the terrorist operation which took place in Luxor," it said. It gave no further details. Colombian authorities said in Bogota on Oct. 21 that a man identified as a "highly dangerous" leader of Egypt's largest group of Islamists had been arrested in Colombia and deported to neighbouring Ecuador.

Turkey wants 'new dialogue' with Germany

BONN (AFP) — Ankara hopes to establish a "new dialogue" with Germany's new government headed by Social Democrat Gerhard Schröder, Turkish President Süleyman Demirel said in remarks published Saturday. "I think it would be useful to begin a new dialogue with the new German government and to openly discuss all issues between our two countries," Demirel told the German daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. An open dialogue is necessary "in order not to disappoint the optimistic expectations" for "the chance to start a new chapter in our relations" with the arrival of a new government in Germany, he said. Demirel said it was "vital" that relations between the two countries develop on a foundation that allows no room for "misunderstandings."

Iran students set new Rushdie bounty

TEHRAN (R) — Students of Iran's major seminary have offered one month's worth of stipends as a new bounty on the head of British author Salman Rushdie, a headline newspaper reported on Saturday. "Students, clerics and scholars of Qom seminary signed a petition... dedicating a month of their stipends to those who carry out the providential sentence against the apostate author of the book 'The Satanic Verses,'" the daily Kayhan said.

Somali clan faction claims town capture

MOGADISHU (AFP) — The Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA) militia has claimed that its fighters have driven out militiamen of wadood Hussein Mohammad Aidid from the Bakol region of south-central Somalia. RRA commander Colonel Hassan Mohammad "Shahi-Gudud" told AFP here that his fighters had driven out Aidid's forces in a crushing defeat from Hudutown, the administrative headquarters of the Bakol region, killing 30 enemy forces.

More southern Sudanese fighters returning to rebel ranks — SPLA

CAIRO (AFP) — Southern Sudanese Rebel Leader John Garang said here Saturday that more southern militiamen that went over to the government side have returned to his opposition army's ranks.

"The South Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF) based in the oil area of Bentiu and the town of Mayom [in the south] have rejoined the Sudan People's Liberation Army," the SPLA

leader said.

About 200 SSDF fighters in another oil area in Upper Nile state have returned to the SPLA fold, he said in a statement signed by Yasser Arman, spokesman for the Asmara-based group.

Other SSDF defections have enabled the SPLA to take control of the government's Wat garrison in the same state, the statement said.

The defections have placed SPLA fighters within 27 kilometres of the Adail oil deposits in Upper Nile, it said, adding that they follow similar defections in September.

The SSDF is comprised of southern factions which have split from the SPLA, the mainstream rebel movement, and last year concluded a peace agreement with the Islamist government in Khartoum.

Universities reopen after students return

KHARTOUM (AP) — Sudan's 27 universities reopened Saturday after a one-month break when some 20,000 male students went south to fight alongside government troops in their war against rebel forces.

At least 16 students from two

universities were killed in the fighting in the Eastern Equatoria province in the south, officials said. No figures were available for the casualties from the other universities.

In the past week, Sudanese television had showed scores of university students being

treated in hospitals.

The government had closed the universities for a month to allow students to volunteer to fight against Christian and anti-muslim guerrillas seeking autonomy for the southern region. It said 20,000 men joined the fighting.

JORDAN TELEVISION

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 Cartoon — The Pink Panther
15:20 Cartoon — The Pumpkin Patch
15:30 The Adventures of the Black Stallion
16:00 Big Cat Diary
16:30 Vid Kids
17:00 The American Chart Show
18:00 Drama — Bonne Esperance
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 French Programme — Science Magazine (E-M6)
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Comedy — The Brittas Empire
20:00 Today's Environment
20:30 Drama — Renegade
21:05 Farming and Ecology
21:30 Behind the Scene
22:00 News in English
22:30 Mini-series — The Beggar Prince (P. 1)
23:30 Dodge Howser
23:59 End of T. X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:29 Fajr
05:47 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:19 Dhuhr
14:23 Asr
16:51 Maghrib
18:09 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweidieh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366
Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/46234811
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751
Arman International Church Tel. 5865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweidieh Tel. 5920146
The Uniate Catholic Church Tel. 4624757
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052
The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331
The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Temperatures are expected to dip, skies partly cloudy, with a chance of scattered showers in the northern parts of the Kingdom, and winds westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 11/23
Aqaba 16/27
Deserts 08/24
Jordan Valley 17/28

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 26, Aqaba 28 Humidity readings: Amman 32 per cent, Aqaba 50 per cent.
Following are the highest temperatures expected today in the following areas:
Ajloun 20
Jerash 26
Um Qays 26
Madaba 24
Petra 26
Dead Sea 32

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Arafat Ashhab 5602507
Dr. Jamal Jbarah 5347351
Dr. Ayman Al Mulahebi 4875748

Dr. Hatem Hannoun 5154984
Firas pharmacy 5661912
Al Asera pharmacy 4637055
Nair's pharmacy 4623672
Al Salam pharmacy 4636730
Yacoub pharmacy 4644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 4637660
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IRBID:
Dr. Lutfi Shalabi (02) 241798
Al Quds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Issa Omari (09) 901266
Khaliq pharmacy (09) 985417

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade 4617101
Blood Bank 4775121
Highway Police 5343402
Traffic Police 4896390
Public Security Dept. 4630321
Hotel Complaints 5605800
Price Complaints 5661176
Water & Sewage Complaints 4897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 4787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 0132
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101

Jordan Television 4773111
Radio Jordan 4774111
Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Electric Power Co. 4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199
The Islamic Abdi 5666131/7
Hussein Medical Centre 5856856
Luzmila 4630195
Khalidi Maternity 4644281/6
Akileh Maternity 4642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362
Malhas, J. Amman 4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071
Shmeisani Hospital 5669131
Jordan Hospital 5607550
University Hospital 5353444
Al-Muassir Hospital 5667271/9
Al-Ahli, Abdali 5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4771101/3
Al-Bashir 4775111/26
Army, Marka 4891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 5602240/50
Arnal Hospital 5674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09) 983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09) 900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09) 986731
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09) 990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02) 275555
Roman Catholic Hospital (02) 272725
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02) 7101372, (02) 7103101
Rosary Sisters Hospital (02) 7102831, (02) 7102011
Specialty Hospital (02) 7103100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03) 2014111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44) 53200-5, where it should always be verified.
Information on other flights can be supplied on phone (44) (52700).
Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:25 Bombay (RJ)
08:50 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:00 Beirut (RJ)
09:45 Jeddah, Aqaba (RJ)
10:45 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
16:00 Brussels (RJ)
16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:55 Madrid (RJ)

17:45 London (RJ)
18:05 Athens (RJ)
18:05 Paris (RJ)
21:25 Rome (RJ)
21:45 Frankfurt, Geneva (RJ)
23:00 Vienna, Aqaba (RJ)
23:59 Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights
07:55 Dubai (EK)
10:30 Jeddah (SV)
12:00 Moscow (SU)
12:00 Sanaa (YF)
12:30 Abu Dhabi (GF)
14:45 Doha (QR)
18:40 Beirut (ME)
19:05 Paris (AF)
20:25 Tel Aviv (LY)
20:40 Cairo (MS)
23:10 Istanbul (TK)
01:15 Amsterdam (KL)
04:15 London (BA)

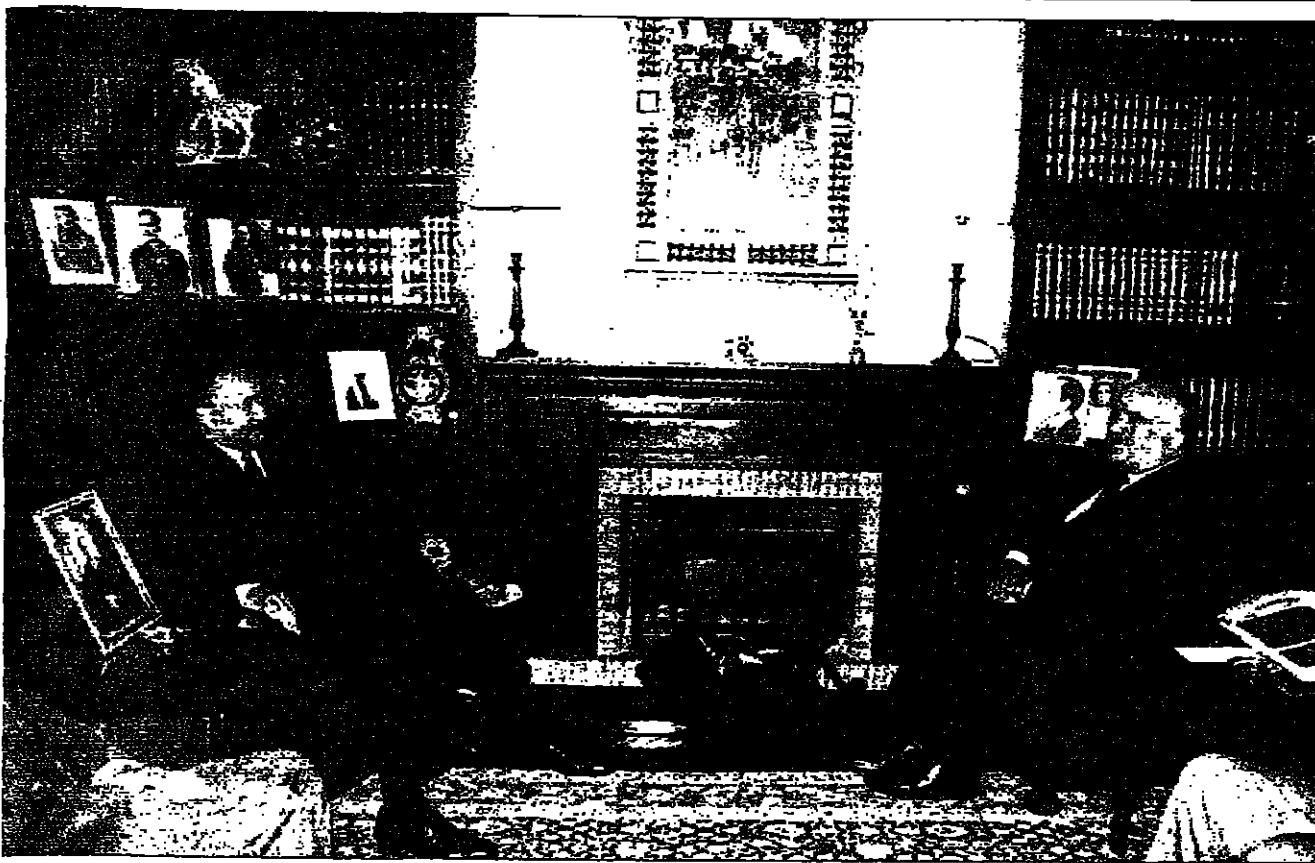
Royal Wings (RW)
08:20 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
10:35 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
18:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
19:20 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
23:25 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:20 Beirut (RJ)
05:20 Aqaba, Paris (add) (RJ)

08:00 Aqaba, Frankfurt (RJ)
11:15 Aqaba, Rome (RJ)
11:15 Aqaba, Vienna (RJ)
11:25 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:00 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:15 Athens (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
20:00 Aqaba, Paris (add) (RJ)
20:25 Cairo (RJ)
20:30 Jeddah (RJ)
20:35 New Delhi (RJ)
21:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:30 Bangkok (RJ)
22:30 Damascus (RJ)
06:10 Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)
06:30 Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights
07:25 Frankfurt (LH)
07:25 Damascus, London (BA)
07:25 Paris (AF)
08:55 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (EK)
12:00 Jeddah (SV)
13:20 Doha (GF)
13:30 Moscow (SU)
15:35 Doha (QR)
20:00 Beirut (ME)
21:15 Tel Aviv (LY)
21:40 Cairo (MS)
02:15 Amsterdam (KL)
04:45 Alexandria (BA)

Royal Wings (RW)
06:00 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
08:45 Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport) (RW)
09:30 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)
17:30 Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport) (RW)
21:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, holds talks with Mauritanian Foreign Minister Sheikh Afieh Ould Mohammad Khuna at the Royal Court yesterday (Photo by Boghos)

Regent, Mauritanian FM discuss bilateral relations, Arab issues

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Saturday held talks at the Royal Court with Mauritanian Foreign Minister Sheikh Afieh Ould Mohammad Khuna on bilateral relations and issues of common concern to Arab states. The Regent called for the development of inter-Arab relations and closer cooperation in various fields, which he described as prerequisites for protecting

pan-Arab interests. Khuna conveyed to His Majesty King Hussein and the Regent greetings from the Mauritanian president and wishes for the quick recovery of the King who, he said, has been spearheading efforts to protect Arab and Islamic countries' interests.

Khuna said the Mauritanian people take pride in the Hashemite leadership's efforts to safeguard the interests of the Arab and

Islamic nations. Khuna, who arrived in Jordan following visits to Israel and the Palestinian self-rule areas, praised the King's efforts to help the Palestinians and the Israelis reach an agreement, which he described as a positive step in the peace process.

Prince Hassan underlined the need for the concerned parties to implement their agreement and called on the Arab states to provide all possible support for the

Palestinian people's rights. Earlier Saturday, Khuna met with Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib and discussed means of promoting bilateral relations.

Khuna said Mauritania would like to develop cooperation with Jordan in economic, trade and other fields and is looking forward to a visit by Jordanian businesspersons to explore prospects for investments in agriculture, tourism and mining.

Defence lawyer for accused teenage murderer rests case

Court sets Nov. 5 to hear prosecution's closing arguments

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The defence for 19-year-old Sa'eed Qashash, accused of murdering 11 family members and a childhood friend in June, rested its case Saturday, and the court set Nov. 5 to hear the prosecution's closing arguments.

Qashash, who reportedly confessed to authorities last June to murdering his father, mother and other family members because they harassed him about his academic performance, last week retracted his confession in court, claiming that

"four other persons were the actual killers."

During Saturday's session, court-appointed lawyer Ali Talafah asked the court, for the third time, to refer his client for a psychiatric examination.

However, the tribunal, comprising Justices Mohammad Ajarmeh, Mifteh Mubaidin and Issa Hamdan, rejected his request.

During the opening session of Qashash's trial in September, the defendant refused to undergo psychiatric testing, stating that he "was mentally fit to stand

trial."

If convicted of the 12 counts of premeditated murder, Qashash could face the death penalty.

None of the victims' relatives dropped charges against him.

According to court documents, Qashash plotted to kill his family members and classmate Atta Sha'alan because his family threatened to kick him out if he failed the tawjihi for the second time.

The suspect allegedly lured the victims one after the other to the basement of the family's house and shot

each of them while they had their backs to him, then piled their bodies and sealed the basement's door and windows with cement and bricks.

The victims of the mass murder, which took place in the Bnyat neighbourhood, included his mother Tharayah, 50, his father Amin, 57, his sisters Karimah, 25, Mirvat, 17, Wafa, nine, and Insaaf, 27, her 30-year-old husband, Jamal Turk, 30, and their two children, Halah, two, and Zaid, three, as well as his brothers Mohammad, 30, and Mustafa, 17.

Death sentence for man convicted of raping 12-year-old in 1996

Victim sentenced to one year for manslaughter in child's death

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — A 45-year-old man was sentenced to death by the Criminal Court on Saturday for raping his 12-year-old niece in 1996.

The court had at first acquitted Mohammad Mansour of the rape charges in March 1998. But yesterday, a different tribunal, acting upon the Court of Cassation's request, found Mansour guilty of the charge and sentenced him to death.

In an unusual conviction, however, the same tribunal yesterday found Mansour's victim guilty of manslaughter in connection with the death of the infant she bore after becoming pregnant following the rape. The minor was ordered detained for one year at a juvenile

centre.

The court stated that the minor will remain free until the verdict is reviewed by a higher court, which will either ratify or overturn the Criminal Court's ruling.

According to court documents, Mansour went to the minor's home in the Jaber area near the Syrian border in April 1996 while her parents were out of the house, and molested her while she was sleeping.

"When the child woke up, Mansour warned her not to tell anyone and threatened that her older uncle Abdullah would kill her if he knew about the matter," according to court transcripts.

Two months later Mansour went to his niece's house twice and on both

occasions raped her and repeated his threats, the court stated.

"Mansour told her that if she informed anyone she would be the only loser and that no one would harm him," the court said.

It added that the girl became pregnant, but none of her family members knew, and "on the day of the delivery she went to the roof of her house alone and had the child."

After the delivery, "the girl did not know what to do and... threw the child in the bushes next to her house," the court said.

The infant was found dead by the girl's mother the following morning, it added.

The court said the girl's father, Mansour's brother,

was at work and her mother was at the hospital for medical check-ups on the three occasions she was assaulted.

In its ruling, the court said it relied on both defendants' testimonies and a paternity examination which indicated that it was 99 per cent certain that the infant was Mansour's. The infant was a girl.

Criminal Prosecutor Zuhair Attiyat had sought the maximum penalty for both defendants.

The tribunal was presided over by Judge Jihad Khasawneh and included Judges Abdullah Owies and Yassin Abdullah.

The verdicts will automatically be reviewed by the Court of Cassation within the next 30 days.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince Faisal to open aviation conference

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Faisal on Monday will open a regional aviation conference organised by the Dubai-based Middle East magazine in cooperation with Royal Wings. Representatives of travel agents, airlines, mass media and companies manufacturing planes will be taking part in the two-day conference.

U.S. commerce secretary arrives Nov. 11

AMMAN (Petra) — U.S. Secretary of Commerce William Daley will arrive in Jordan on Nov. 11 on a three-day visit during which he will hold talks with senior Jordanian officials. Daley's agenda includes talks on cooperation between Jordan and the U.S.

PNA police delegation inspects academy

AMMAN (Petra) — A Palestinian police delegation Saturday visited Jordan's Royal Police Academy to learn from the Kingdom's experience in security issues. The head of the academy, Ahmad Amrat, briefed the director general of the Palestinian National Authority's Local Government Ministry, Mohammad Qarout, who headed the delegation, about the academy's role in implementing training programmes. The two sides also discussed the academy's role in developing scientific and training criteria in cooperation with several governmental organisations.

Exporters delegation leaves for Algeria

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian Exporters Society delegation today will leave for Algeria on an official visit to support and strengthen the two countries' economic relations. Society Deputy President and delegation head Kamal Qaish said the visit aims at improving economic relations with the Algerian public and private sectors and increasing trade exchanges.

Khreisha holds talks with Thai agriculture minister

AMMAN (Petra) — Agriculture Minister Mihjem Khreisha on Saturday held talks with his Thai counterpart B. Adireksan on importing fertilisers from Jordan and benefiting from the Kingdom's experiences in irrigation systems and tree planting.

Adireksan said Jordan could benefit from Thailand's successful experience in protecting forests and managing parks and presented a briefing on his country's agricultural production.

Khreisha reviewed the Jordanian agricultural sector's development, noting that the country's forest areas are estimated at 1.3 million dunums. He said the ministry's agricultural nurseries produce eight million tree saplings every year.

The Thai minister later met with Minister of

Tourism Akel Biltaji and discussed prospects of cooperation between the two countries in tourism-related affairs.

Also Saturday, Khreisha met the president and board members of the Jordan Veterinary Association to discuss means of developing livestock in Jordan.

Khreisha said the ministry is working to create pasture lands to help boost livestock wealth and provide veterinary services to farmers.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Khreisha added, is planning to introduce legislation for promoting the agricultural sector and the association's law.

He called for a joint meeting of agricultural engineers and association members to work out a mechanism for cooperation in promoting the agricultural sector.

what's going on

LECTURE

* Home and Away - Local Influence and Commonwealth Colour by Dr. Noha Hommad and Mrs. Anna Obiedat at the British Council, Jabel Amman on Monday Nov. 2 (5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.)

EXHIBITIONS

* Masterworks of the Spanish Contemporary Architecture and Presentation of Architecture Guide: Spain 1920-2000 at Institute Cervantes, Jabel Amman, until Nov. 6.

* Ceramics by Ra'd and Ahmad Al Delsami at Hamam Al Amn Gallery, Garden St. (Tel. 5536098), until Nov. 5.

* Exhibition of works by Palestinian artist Kamal Boullata entitled "Homage to Jerusalem" an exhibition of paintings by late Palestinian artist Zulfia Al Sa'di, an exhibition by Palestinian-American photographer Said Nuseibeh entitled "The Farthest Mosque" at Darat Al Funun, Jabel Weibdeh, until Nov. 12 (Tel. 6643251/2).

Study finds gender gaps in public life, political participation

By a Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Women have less access to information and secondary education than men in Jordan and are limited in the exercise of their political, civil — and in some cases even personal — freedoms, a recent survey concludes.

Although women's issues have drawn more attention over the past few years, the study, carried out jointly by local and international institutions, breaks ground by attempting to measure in a comprehensive and quantitative manner the "psychological barriers" that women have to overcome in order to fully take their place in society.

"Jordanian Society — Living Conditions in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan," published last month by the Oslo-based Institute for Applied Social Sciences (FAPO) in cooperation with the Department of Statistics, presents a variety of indicators to quantify women's involvement in the economy and their role in political and social life. The study analyses the data collected in the 1996 Survey on Jordan's Living Conditions,

carried out on a sample of 6,000 families throughout the Kingdom.

While health services and primary education appear equally available to both men and women, huge gender gaps emerge in the areas of public life, political participation, attitudes towards such involvement, and freedoms in general.

One third of all those interviewed (47 per cent of men and 34 per cent of women) opposed the election of women to local or national councils, or their appointment to ministerial posts, while 20 per cent of men and nine per cent of women said they did not think women should even vote.

A scanty two per cent of women — against 12 per cent of men — are members of at least one voluntary organisation, one of the lowest levels of social involvement.

Turning from actual participation to attitudes towards political involvement, gender differences persist, with 34 per cent of men and 10 per cent of women believing women should not be engaged in charitable activities.

One chapter in the study,

"Attitudes and Public Life," by Hiam Omar Kalimat and Age A. Tilmess, contends that age affects the opinions of females and males towards women's participation in public life, but in opposite ways.

While older men are more positive to women's involvement than younger men, women above the age of 50 are more conservative than younger women.

Assuming that women with greater freedom of movement come from more liberal and progressive families, the authors develop a "freedom of movement index" according to which only 27 per cent of women are able to move around "very or quite" freely.

According to the survey, 52 per cent of women are not allowed to study abroad, around 58 per cent cannot visit relatives outside town alone, and around 40 and 30 per cent cannot visit a doctor or go to the local market alone, respectively.

Women also have more limited access to information than men, with the widest gender gap in newspaper consumption (only 15 per cent of women read at least one news-

paper daily, against almost 40 per cent of men), mainly due to higher illiteracy rates among women.

Although in education women have made the greatest gains over the past two decades, the illiteracy rate is estimated at as high as 20 per cent among women and nine per cent among men.

Issa Nassar and David Drury, who authored the chapter in "Jordanian Society" dedicated to education, stress that functional literacy is still relatively low for adult women in rural areas, even among females in their 20s and 30s.

Large differences characterise parents' expectations of their daughters' versus their sons' academic careers, with 15 per cent of parents saying they are opposed to their female children acquiring higher education.

Consequently, women account for one in every five Jordanians who obtained a degree in another Arab state and for only one in every 10 Jordanians who obtained a university degree in Europe, North America or Asia.

The reasons behind the tendency to educate women close

to home could be either social ("to keep women under close supervision and protect them from corrupting influences") and financial (studying abroad is more expensive and priority is given to males).

Less access to education translates into low women's presence in the labour market. According to the survey, only 15 per cent of adult women are in the labour force, as most women stop working when they marry.

While the general unemployment rate is placed at 17 per cent, it breaks down to 15 per cent for men and 27 per cent among women.

Nawaf Kalalideh and Sara Randall, in their chapter on population and migration, conclude that women's education levels increased "enormously" over the last two decades, but a significant gap between boys and girls still remains after primary education.

Amid increasing calls by local NGOs to raise the legal marriage age from the current 16 to 18 for both women and men, the survey confirms that marriage patterns are changing fairly rapidly.

While the average age for

males marrying for the first time has remained relatively stable around 25 over the last 40 years, that of women has risen significantly from 17 to above 20 over the same period.

With the gradual rise in women's age at first marriage, experts say that communication and relations between the spouses will also improve, providing a healthier family environment for both the couple and their children.

But with the rise in marriage age, coupled with changing personal needs and increasing economic hardships, single women are becoming more and more common in Jordanian society.

While 10 years ago only 15 per cent of women 25-29 years of age were single, the proportion at present has doubled to 30 per cent, the survey says.

OBITUARY

The New Zealand Consulate in Amman regrets to announce the sudden demise of

Keith J. WATSON

a citizen of New Zealand, in the early hours of Saturday, October 31, 1998, as a result of a massive cardiac arrest.

His remains will be repatriated to New Zealand to be laid to rest in his hometown.

Our condolences to his wife Mary Jane, his son Nicholas, his daughter Gretchen and his mother Molly.

Mbeki overruled Mandela amid ANC split on TRC

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — South Africa's Deputy President Thabo Mbeki brushed aside President Nelson Mandela's concerns and led efforts by the ruling ANC to try to block the Truth Commission's final report, a newspaper reported Saturday.

"The decision was Thabo Mbeki's, as head of the ANC. Mandela gave his input but it was ignored," a senior Mandela aide told the Saturday Star.

The party took an unsuccessful 11th-hour court injunction to try to have the report blocked prior to its release Thursday.

The report found that the party had committed gross violations of human rights in the fight against apartheid.

Mandela was happy to have the report released without the removal of references to the ANC's camps in Angola where inmates were allegedly tortured and killed, the paper said.

Mandela said at the official handover of the report Thursday, hours after the ANC injunction was dismissed, that he welcomed it

"with all its imperfections, as an aid that the TRC has given us to help reconcile and build our nation."

Mbeki, in stark contrast, slammed the TRC for publishing the report, without considering his party's objections.

And it is clear that the legal challenge has caused deep division within the party, some of whose senior members — including Justice Minister Dullah Omar — were not consulted, according to the Mail and Guardian.

One ANC MP told the weekly paper the court challenge was "unbelievably stupid" and would damage the party's reputation abroad for fair-mindedness and a willingness to face up to the past.

The Star said Mbeki's stand had alienated many of his comrades in the ANC's National Executive Committee (NEC), with a number of committee members telephoning TRC Chairman Archbishop Desmond Tutu and TRC commissioners to apologise for his conduct.

Mbeki took over as president of the ANC from

Mandela a year ago, seen as a first step to him assuming the state presidency when Mandela, 80, steps down next year.

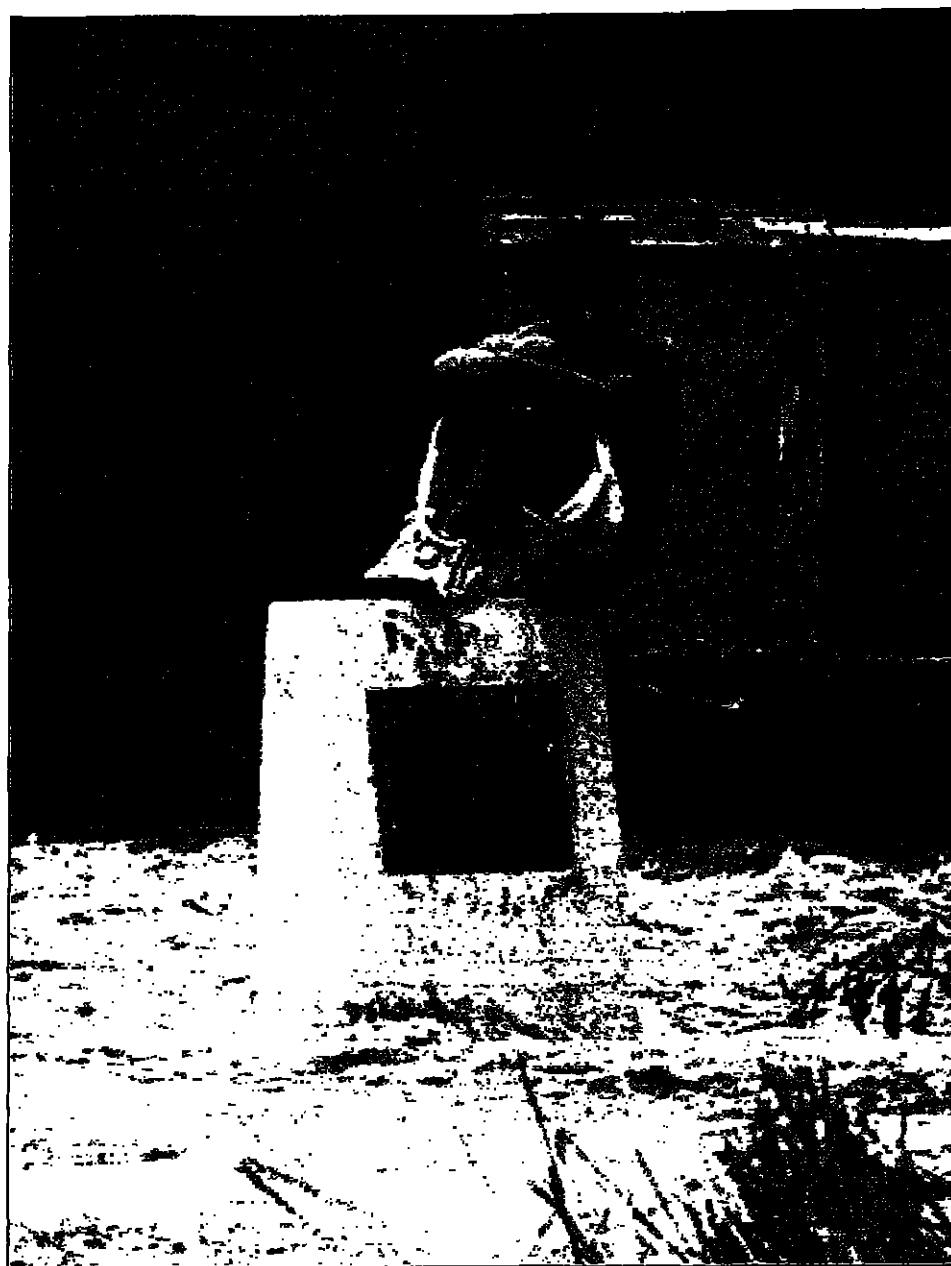
TRC commissioners told the newspaper they were disturbed to note the difference in attitude to the report of Mandela and Mbeki.

As the country's future president, Mbeki was seen to be trying to suppress sections of a public inquiry because it would have damaged the image of his organisation.

It was evident that Mandela, who had insisted the report be released to the public at the same time as he received it, did not agree with the ANC leadership, said the paper.

Commissioners told the paper they had received numerous telephone calls. One said they had been "inundated" by ANC executives and members Thursday apologising for the decision to take them to court.

Those who apologised included provincial premiers, cabinet ministers, and members of the NEC as well as MPs, it said.



A young boy, resident of the town of San Cristobal, some 25 km north of San Pedro Sula, awaits atop a marble street marker to be rescued from the flooded town. Over 30 people have been killed and half a million people have been evacuated from the Caribbean coast of Honduras due to the onslaught of hurricane Mitch (Reuters photo).

Mitch ravages Central America, death toll soars

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (R) — At least 140 people have been killed by rising floodwaters and mudslides from tropical storm Mitch's six-day rampage through impoverished areas of Central America and the Caribbean, officials said Friday.

Authorities said the toll was likely to rise further as Mitch continued to pound the area with heavy rainfall and winds of 85 kph, adding to the misery of more than a half a million people forced from their homes in Honduras alone.

The fate of 31 crew and passengers lost at sea on a luxury yacht once owned by Greek shipping tycoon Aristotle Onassis was still unknown. The U.S. Coast Guard said it was searching for the Fantome, a 258-foot four-masted schooner missing since Tuesday.

Late Friday, Mitch was centred just 55 km northeast of the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa, according to the U.S. National Weather Service, advancing slowly on a city of one million gripped by panic and worried about impoverished shanties perched on hillsides.

"This is a disaster and it will be a catastrophe. Tegucigalpa will be destroyed if the rains continue," Mayor Cesar Castellanos told Reuters.

"The danger for the next 48 hours is still incredibly high. It hasn't stopped raining and all of the soil is already completely saturated," Lt. Col. Guillermo Erazo of Honduras' disaster coordination committee, told Reuters.

The official body count soared in Nicaragua Friday to

72 with 117 still missing and feared dead, according to the Nicaraguan army's Civil Defence Committee.

Emergency workers in neighbouring Honduras, which bore the brunt of Mitch when it was an unusually powerful hurricane earlier in the week, reported 60 dead.

In Mexico, four people died crossing a swollen river caused by Mitch's heavy rains, which also killed one person each in Jamaica, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Panama.

Earlier in the week Mitch had grown into the fourth most powerful Atlantic storm this century, threatening to come ashore in Central America with 295 kph winds.

Even though it had weakened considerably since then, the storm continued to pour 62.5 cm a day on coastal areas of Nicaragua and Honduras.

In both countries, banana plantations were flooded to their tree tops and swollen rivers swept bridges, houses and corpses before them. In Honduras, the storm destroyed an estimated 7,000 homes.

On the Honduran coast, scores of towns and villages were flooded up to their roofs. Flood victims were perched in trees and on rooftops, crying out for aid that did not come because thick clouds made helicopter rescue missions impossible.

The major industrial city of San Pedro Sula, about 160 km north of the capital, was completely cut off by road from the outside world, stranding Honduran President Carlos Flores as he toured the devastation.

Flores declared a nationwide

emergency and the congress ordered all basic food and fuel prices frozen.

The Bay Islands of Roatan and Guanaja, 50 km off Honduras' northern Caribbean coast, remained completely cut off Friday and officials said they did not have damage estimates for those areas. But they feared the worst after the eye of the storm hovered near the islands for nearly two days.

Rescue workers said they saw bodies floating in the water after the Ulua river overran its banks in the town of El Progreso, near San Pedro Sula. The river rampaged through the town, pouring through banks and other buildings and spewing out second story windows.

Emergency shelters in San Pedro Sula were packed with tens of thousands of refugees, who set up huge tent camps along every highway, or waded to any high land they could find.

Victoria Madrid, 76, said she and 19 friends and family crammed into a small bus and spent all night driving around the city trying to find shelter. They finally parked outside the already-full municipal soccer stadium where they were surviving on green bananas and waiting for emergency rations.

"God, when will you stop sending this rain?" Madrid asked.

In Tegucigalpa, hundreds of heavily armed police in the capital tried to keep 2,500 prisoners from breaking out of a jail whose walls were collapsing from the floodwaters. One escaped prisoner was shot dead.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Japanese police arrest U.S. Marine corporal for hit-and-run

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese police arrested a U.S. Marine corporal in the island of Okinawa for a hit-and-run accident and drunk driving, officials said Saturday. Naha police in Okinawa said it arrested Scotty Jackson, 22, Friday, a Marine based in Camp Schwab in the northern city of Nago on the island. "We detected alcohol in his breath after arresting him for drunk driving and inflicting injury," a Naha police official alleged. Police said a 27-year-old man was slightly injured when his motorcycle was in collision with Jackson's vehicle. Jackson denied he was drunk at the time of the accident, the official said. Naha police also questioned a 30-year-old U.S. Air Force sergeant who was in the car with Jackson, but he had already been released, police officials said. The arrest came after a 23-year-old U.S. Marine, Randall Eskridge, was indicted for colliding with a schoolgirl and drunken driving. The 18-year-old high school student, Yuki Uema, died in hospital from a brain concussion one week after Eskridge allegedly collided with her and drove off without stopping on Oct. 7. Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi had called for stricter U.S. military discipline and expressed "strong regret" in a meeting with U.S. Ambassador Thomas Foley. Okinawa, occupied by the U.S. military until 1972, accounts for 0.6 per cent of Japan's total land, but somewhat reluctantly hosts about 27,000 of the 47,000 U.S. troops in Japan. Three U.S. servicemen raped a 12-year-old girl in Okinawa in 1995, unleashing a tide of resentment against U.S. forces which has yet to abate despite a vigorous friendship campaign by the military.

Lone demonstrator turns up amid massive police presence

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — A massive show of police force in the Malaysian capital Saturday appeared to have scared off opposition groups planning a major rally, but one lone demonstrator defiantly turned up. In the heavily Muslim community of Kampung Baru, where riots broke out last weekend, one man appeared outside a mosque waving a caricature calling on Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad to resign. Supporters of ousted deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim had called for a rally in a shopping district but by late afternoon no crowd materialised as riot police, plainclothes officers and journalists waited for hours. Anwar is to be tried on corruption charges Monday. Earlier Saturday, in a strong message to would-be demonstrators, special police armed with M16 assault rifles ringed an office and commercial complex where Mahathir was attending a function. At the one-man rally, some 100 onlookers watched as the demonstrator, wearing a white skull cap, shouted "Reformasi," the battle cry of the pro-Anwar movement, at a busy street junction. Motorists honked their horns and motorists cyclists pumped their fist in his direction in a gesture of support. The demonstrator refused to give his name, but said he was 36 years old and a resident of the community. "We ask for justice. I am not afraid to do this. God is always with me. Can't we say the truth?" he told journalists. "I did not call other people. I am not a leader, I am just a follower. Can't one person do this? This is my right," he said.

Thousands of military personnel on alert in flooding region

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands (AP) — Facing continuing threats of flooding, up to 1,000 military personnel were put on standby Saturday in the eastern and northern Netherlands to deter floodwaters. In recent days, this largely below-sea-level country has been struck by higher-than-normal levels of rain, causing massive flooding in the Groningen and Drenthe provinces. Although the danger of large-scale flooding has slowly diminished with receding water levels, conditions in some areas still remained critical, Dutch television reported. No evacuations have been carried out, but the troops were placed on alert as a precaution. Rising water levels also were recorded for two rivers in the central Netherlands — the IJssel and the Vecht — which were bearing the brunt of torrential rains from nearby Germany.

Families of Tiananmen victims protest freeze on foreign donations

BEIJING (AFP) — Families of victims of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre have protested China's freeze on bank payments of foreign donations to them, a U.S.-based human rights group said Saturday. In an open letter to Chinese Communist leaders, 51 victims or the relatives of victims protested the freeze on payments and threatened to intensify their action if the decision was not lifted. Human Rights in China (HRIC) said in a statement received here. The donations were made out to Ding Zilin, whose son died during the June 4, 1989 army crackdown on pro-democracy protesters on Tiananmen Square. The exact number killed during the crackdown is unknown but witnesses estimate fatalities in the hundreds. Ding had taken on the task of distributing the donations to families of the victims for the past nine years. Wednesday, Ding said authorities have ordered the Bank of China to withhold payments of 11,620 DM (\$6,900) in donations from Chinese students living in Germany. The Chinese government had withheld donations twice before in 1994 and in 1995. In September, the Communist government confiscated donations raised by Chinese dissidents for the summer flood victims. Human rights activists said police in the central province of Hubei, one of the regions most affected by the flooding of the Yangtze River, confiscated some 4,000 yuan (\$483) raised by dissidents.

Marine life dying from boat paint pollution

LONDON (R) — The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Sunday urged world maritime authorities to ban the use of a toxic chemical in ships' paints, saying "disturbing evidence" of its effect on marine life is coming in from around the world. The environment pressure group said sea otters were dying off the U.S. coast and dolphins, whales, sea lions, sea birds and fish in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans were being poisoned by tributyltin (TBT). TBT is used in antifouling "organotin" paints applied to ships' hulls to stop marine creatures sticking to them. "The only way forward lies in a worldwide ban on the use of organotins in anti-fouling paints by 2001 and the development of environmentally friendly alternatives," said the head of WWF's British marine programme Sian Pullen. He called on the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), which meets in London this week, to take action. WWF said work it had supported in Germany along with ship owners and paint manufacturers had shown that biocide-free paints were effective in keeping hulls clear. "By 2001, a range of alternatives to TBT-based paints will be well established, making this ban a realistic proposition for the IMO," it said.

Three killed, 40 injured in Pakistan bomb explosion

LAHORE, Pakistan (AFP) — At least three people were killed and 40 injured Saturday when a bomb exploded near a mosque in Sialkot in Pakistan's province of Punjab, police said.

The bomb, believed to be containing two kilograms of explosive, was planted on a bicycle left close to the mosque belonging to the fundamentalist Ahle Hadith group, they said.

The time-device went off in an area where labourers were at work on the construction of a building, the police said, adding that three workers were killed and 40 others injured.

Seven of the injured were in critical condition, police said.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the bombing.

Police said an investigation was under way and it was unclear whether the mosque was a target of the bombing.

Sialkot, an eastern border city opposite Jammu in the Indian-controlled part of disputed Kashmir state, is a centre of sports goods and surgical instruments industries.

Punjab, the country's biggest province, has been plagued by sectarian unrest that has claimed scores of lives this year in violence

blamed on militants from majority Sunni and minority Shiite Muslim communities.

In the past Pakistani authorities have often blamed Indian secret service for sponsoring sabotage and terrorist acts in the country. Similar accusations have been made by Indians.

The boundary between Sialkot and Jammu has witnessed frequent exchanges of fire between border security personnel of the two countries.

Pakistani-controlled northern third of Kashmir lies north of Sialkot. India holds two-thirds of the disputed Himalayan state.

Hopes rise for Guinea-Bissau accord at West Africa summit

ABUJA (AFP) — Hopes rose Saturday for an agreement to end the five-month-old crisis in Guinea-Bissau, as west African leaders in Abuja began a second day of a summit meeting dominated by conflict prevention and resolution.

Guinea-Bissau, a tiny country on the west African coast, has been torn apart by a rebellion which began on June 7, when President Joao Bernardo Vieira sacked his armed forces chief of staff General Ansumane Mane, sparking a mutiny.

Both men flew into Abuja Friday with a plan for resolving the conflict, the fruit of ground-breaking face-to-face talks in Gambia.

Meeting fellow presidents from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) into the early hours of Saturday, Vieira asked them to bring pressure to bear on Mane to sign an agreement at the summit.

The sticking point was Mane's insistence that all foreign troops in the country must leave before peace can be agreed, a delegate from one west African country told AFP.

"It is looking quite hopeful but there is still the troops question," another said.

Senegalese President Abdou Diouf, who has

deployed troops to back Vieira, told the meeting he wanted to see an overall political settlement to the crisis, which is complicated by the presence of Senegalese separatist rebels in an area bordering on Guinea-Bissau.

Such a settlement should precede the withdrawal of Senegalese troops from Guinea-Bissau, said Diouf.

Earlier, the summiters unanimously adopted a draft treaty providing for a new permanent peace-keeping structure in the region, creating an entirely new department in the ECOWAS secretariat and providing a new command structure for a regional intervention force, delegates said. The ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security would be designed to tackle crises before they blew up and to seek early resolution, also providing for the use of armed force if all else fails, said ECOWAS officials, delighted by the development.

The adoption of the treaty was seen here as a significant attempt by the region to put an end to the succession of conflicts that have wracked west Africa, from Liberia, to Sierra Leone to Guinea-Bissau, in the

past decade.

Other developments included the launch of a regional travellers cheque, aimed at easing trade and travel in the region as part of a drive to regional economic integration, and an appeal from visiting South African President Nelson Mandela for greater cooperation between regional bodies in Africa.

On Sierra Leone, the heads of state agreed to strengthen the ECOWAS intervention force, ECOMOG, which ousted a junta from power in Freetown in February and which continues to fight junta remnants and their rebel allies in the north and east of the country.

No figures were given for the additional deployments but the presidents of Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Mali, and Niger all agreed to send extra troops to Sierra Leone, according to a delegate.

The leaders rejected a demand from Liberian president and former warlord Charles Taylor that the ECOMOG contingent in his country should remain but be put under his command. Saturday, the leaders were to continue debate on appointments, including the election of the next ECOWAS chairman.

U.S., China monitor Golden Triangle drug trafficking

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States and China have been staffing a secret electronic surveillance post along China's border with Burma since 1995 to monitor drug traffickers from the Golden Triangle. The Washington Post said Saturday.

China has also received several dozen all-terrain vehicles for drug interdiction along the mountainous border with Burma and has access to a U.S.-established secret fund to run the surveillance centre, U.S. and Chinese sources told the daily.

The jointly-staffed centre near the Chinese border town of Ruili, a significant step forward in a U.S. intelligence-sharing relationship with China that dates back to 1971 and has survived many tense moments between the two countries.

The 1996 standoff after China lobbed missiles over Taiwan, for example, did not affect the establishment of the listening post, Chinese sources said, adding that intelligence cooperation is insulated from "short-term" troubles in the relationship.

And the Ruili centre is only one of several joint initiatives between the two nations to combat crime, following the October 1997 summit here between U.S. President Bill Clinton and Chinese President Jiang Zemin, the sources said.

A liaison group for law enforcement agreed last month to draw up a list of Chinese and U.S. suspects who are believed to be operating in each other's countries, the daily said.

The group is also expected to arrange the exchange of law

enforcement personnel and an agreement to share evidence and harmonise judicial procedures, with the ultimate goal to formulate a legal cooperation agreement and an extradition treaty.

A March 1998 report by the State Department on drug trafficking said China had also agreed to establish a "real time e-mail link with Washington to exchange information more rapidly on drug trafficking and traffickers," the daily said.

The link, listening post and other measures are important, the report said, because of the quantity of heroin from the Golden Triangle that transits China.

The daily added Chinese officials estimate that 90 per cent of the heroin that flows through China comes from Burma.



A woman cries in front of a line of flowers and candles near a discotheque which burned out late Thursday night in Sweden's city of Gothenburg. Sixty people died and more than 100 were seriously injured (Reuters photo)

Nine still critical after Sweden disco fire

GOTHENBURG, Sweden (R) — Nine young people were still fighting for their lives in Sweden Saturday after a Halloween disco inferno that killed 60 and injured 170.

The nine were in critical condition in special hospital burns units. Many more had serious injuries from Thursday night's fire and the panicked scramble to escape the flames, some by breaking windows and leaping out into the darkness.

Survivors and rescuers told newspapers how up to 400 terrified youths had tried to squeeze through a single exit and how bodies tumbled out of second storey windows of the building in Sweden's second city Gothenburg.

"A 15-year-old died while I held him in my arms. A young girl that I had pulled out died without anyone being able to

do anything about it," rescuer Abbas Kazim told daily Expressen.

In one small room, rescuers found 20 to 30 bodies crushed and tangled together. They had probably been killed by the fire's toxic fumes.

"I was the only one out of those around me who got up when the door opened," 14-year-old survivor, Jenny Petersson, told GT newspaper.

The fire started just before midnight Thursday at the disco where up to 400 youngsters, mostly immigrants aged 13 to 20, were dancing at the Macedonian cultural centre.

Only about 18 victims have so far been identified because they were so badly burnt. Police said they were trying to identify the dead without having to put grieving parents through the grim task of looking at the mutilated bodies.

"At the hospital they said our girl was probably among those at the morgue," Hussein Mjotahed told Expressen.

"We're devastated. Where are our children? We want to know," Police said a special 100-strong task force was questioning witnesses, answering phones on a hotline for relatives of the victims, or taking part in a technical investigation which may lead to criminal charges.

Reports suggest an electrical spark may have set off the inferno, but police could not confirm this.

"The technicians started working again this morning. We won't say anything until we know the cause or know that we don't know," police spokesman Mats Glansberg told Reuters.

Most of the revellers were from Macedonia, Yugoslavia, Somalia or Iran. Sweden has

traditionally welcomed immigrants and about one in eight of its population has a foreign background.

Flowers and candles mounted up at an altar at the site in Gothenburg's docklands, Oct. 31. All Saints' Day, is a holiday in Sweden when people place candles on their deceased relatives' graves.

Prime Minister Goran Persson flew to Sweden's second city Friday for a memorial service in the Domkyrkan cathedral with 1,500 weeping mourners, half of them teenagers. He was visibly shocked.

"It was all burned out with only a skeleton left. On the floor there were shoes and boots — boots just like our own children have. It was only then that you could really understand what happened," Persson said, fighting back tears.

Cambodian prince's party rejects summit talks without Sam Rainsy

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — The main Cambodian opposition party led by Prince Norodom Ranariddh Saturday rejected an offer of bilateral coalition-building talks saying strongman Hun Sen's efforts to sideline disident Sam Rainsy were "unacceptable."

The prince's FUNCINPEC party in a written statement called for a resumption of three-way summit negotiations chaired by King Norodom Sihanouk.

"No party with seats at the National Assembly should be left out," the faxed statement said, accusing Hun Sen's ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) of placing "obstacles" in the way of coalition talks.

"FUNCINPEC sees tri-

summit to be presided over by his majesty the king as a way out of the current impasse," it said. Officials from the CPP were unavailable for comment Saturday.

The rejection follows a memorandum Wednesday from Hun Sen's ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) urging the prince to reopen stalled negotiations without Sam Rainsy, whose party came third in July 26 polls.

It said the CPP and the prince's party were the "key holders" to a solution to the current political deadlock and "the nucleus of national reconciliation."

The CPP won the elections, but not with the majority required to rule alone, and has since made efforts to freeze the Sam

Rainsy Party, which came in third, out of government-building negotiations. The prince's party came second in the polls, and has been targeted by the CPP as its choice of coalition partner.

Cambodia has been without a recognised government since the polls and talks on forming a government are stalemated with the opposition accusing Hun Sen of poll fraud and intimidation. The FUNCINPEC party statement blasted the CPP for its unwillingness to make concessions in talks, and said it was vital Hun Sen properly address poll fraud complaints.

The party reissued its demand for the chairmanship of the National Assembly, saying the vice-chair and second vice-chair

positions should go to the CPP and the Sam Rainsy Party respectively.

"Leaving the Sam Rainsy Party no role in the (parliamentary) commissions is unacceptable and against national reconciliation," the statement added. Wednesday the CPP urged FUNCINPEC to reopen talks but said complaints of election fraud and intimidation could not be addressed and the election result was "irrevocable." FUNCINPEC replied saying it was willing to resume coalition talks here if authorities gave a written guarantee of their safety. Prince Ranariddh and Sam Rainsy left the country in late September, claiming they were unsafe here, beginning a slow exodus of party members.

Masood asks Taleban to release Ismael Khan

KABUL (AFP) — Afghan opposition commander Ahmad Shah Masood Saturday asked the Taleban to release a former governor of western Herat province to allow a prisoner swap deal to go ahead.

A spokesman for Masood said that if the Taleban wanted the exchange to go ahead they should free Ismael Khan, a prominent opposition commander and former governor of Herat.

"We want Ismael Khan to be part of this process. We may not swap more than 300 prisoners if they do not agree to free Ismael Khan," spokesman Mohammad Aref said by satellite phone from the northern Panjshir valley.

He said Masood, an ally of ousted president Burhanuddin Rabbani, wanted the exchange to cover all prisoners held by the two sides.

Ismael Khan has spent two years in Taleban captivity. He was captured in northern Faryab in May 1997.

The most senior Taleban official held by Masood is Mulla Mujahid, a former acting defence minister in the Taleban administration, Aref said.

"We want them (Taleban) to release all our men and we will free Mulla Mujahid and all other Taleban in our custody," he said.

He said that an expected swap did not take place Thursday as the 50 pris-

oners the Taleban offered to release were not "our men."

"They were not our fighters. They were ordinary people whom the Taleban had arrested from the streets," Aref said.

The Taleban has accused Masood of using similar tactics and the mutual mistrust has led to snags in the swap process.

Masood's side has submitted to the Taleban a list of 650 militia prisoners and asked the Taleban provide a list of the same number of their detained soldiers in order to resolve the problem, Aref said.

Apart from the listed 650, there might be another 700 Taleban fighters in the custody of

Masood's forces, Aref estimated.

A Taleban official Thursday said that both sides had agreed to swap 1,000 prisoners each in batches of 150 every day.

Masood is seen as the last obstacle to Taleban ambitions to gain control of the whole country. The Islamic militia now holds more than 80 per cent of Afghan territory.

The Taleban suffered losses in a series of offensives against Masood in northeastern Afghanistan this month.

Masood retook Taloqan, the provincial capital of strategic Takhar province on Oct. 17, and claimed to have captured at least 300 Taleban soldiers there.

French AI moves against Pinochet

PARIS (R) — The French arm of Amnesty International said Saturday it wanted to bring a case against General Augusto Pinochet, acting alongside Franco-Chilean families who have already launched lawsuits against him.

A Paris state prosecutor opened a judicial investigation of the former Chilean dictator Friday in a move which could lead to France requesting his extradition from Britain.

The probe was started after five families here appealed to the courts to get Pinochet handed over on a

variety of charges including murder and genocide.

"Amnesty International has decided to stand as a civil plaintiff against the former Chilean president, acting alongside any family which might so desire it," the human rights organisation said in a statement.

In France an organisation or charity can act as a civil plaintiff in cases where it feels it has jurisdiction.

Pinochet was arrested in hospital in London two weeks ago on a warrant from Spanish judges. Switzerland is also trying to have him extradited, and

lawyers in Britain, Italy and Sweden are pursuing cases against him.

The Paris prosecutor opened the probe into the disappearance of three men during Pinochet's rule in the early 1970s. He rejected proceedings over the disappearance of two other people whose deaths have been proven, thus making legal action impossible under the French statute of limitations.

Pinochet won a major legal victory this week when the London High Court ruled that his former status as a head of state gave

him immunity from prosecution. He is currently being held under police guard at a London hospital pending appeal.

Amnesty International rejected the High Court ruling, saying it ran counter to international law as spelled out by the United Nations in a 1946 declaration.

"The principle of international right, which in certain circumstances protects representatives of state, cannot be applied to acts condemned as criminal by international law," Amnesty quoted the U.N. general assembly as saying.

Experts to investigate 'horror' reef cruise

BRISBANE (AFP) — Two senior marine accident specialists have flown to Thursday Island in Queensland's far north to investigate why eight tourists were forced to become mutinous and take over their cruise boat.

Six U.S. and two Spanish tourists on holiday, who allegedly had their lives threatened with a flare gun by a demented dive boat skipper, may sue the owner of the Barrier Reef charter boat.

Queensland police were investigating how the eight-day pleasure cruise from Port Douglas to the Torres Strait went horribly wrong when the 29-year-old captain, a late replacement for the voyage, apparently had a mental breakdown.

Skipperless, the 20-metre Reef Explorer slammed into a reef, 275 kilometres south of Thursday Island in the Coral Sea.

In the confusion, the skipper was overpowered by the passengers and four crew and bound with tape while the vessel's navigator took over for the 22-hour voyage to

Thursday Island.

Upon arrival, the skipper immediately admitted himself to hospital and was yet to be interviewed, a police spokesman said.

Queensland Transport and Main Roads Minister Steve Bredhauer said a maritime safety expert and an accredited maritime surveyor had been dispatched from Cairns and were liaising with police in Thursday Island.

"The Queensland government is concerned about the well-being and safety of passengers on vessels operating in Queensland waters," Bredhauer said.

"I have asked for a thorough investigation of allegations relating to this incident and expect a detailed report next week," he said.

A Queensland Transport diver has already checked the hull of the vessel this morning for any damage after it allegedly hit the reef.

Reef Explorer owner Diane Chester, who made a compensation offer to the eight tourists, said she had no idea what the outcome of the incident would be.

"I forwarded an offer of a refund for their trip and plane fare from Thursday Island," Chester said on television.

"Basically it was a very awkward, hard situation. I really do feel for them," she said.

The passengers each paid 3,000 Australian dollars (\$1,800) for the cruise.

But the solicitor acting for the tourists, Michael Miller, said the offer was not high enough for a group of eight people who believed they were going to die.

"I contacted the company by facsimile and indicated we were looking at it late yesterday (Friday) afternoon," Miller said.

"But the reality of it is, and my advice to clients is, the offer is inadequate," he said.

One of the passengers, Federico Farin of New York, said the skipper had asked them to tie up the crew because he believed they were plotting against him, and had allegedly threatened to set off flares on the boat.

"I said: 'Oh my God, this is bad'. If it was a gun, maybe I would have

taken him out then 'cos that's just one shot. But a flare ... burns. Very dangerous," Farin told ABC Radio.

"He's shouting ... 'They're (the crew) going to sink the boat. They're going to sink the boat for insurance. Tie up the crew'," Farin said.

As a woman passenger tried relaxing the skipper by massaging his shoulders and Farin continued working out how to safely disarm him, the boat continued "zooming at full speed" towards the reef.

"No one's at the wheel ... and the reef's coming up. It was almost like television," he said.

Passengers and crew jumped the captain, wrestling him to the deck when the boat hit the reef.

The incident is another blow to the Queensland dive industry after a nightmare year.

Earlier this month, the skipper of a Port Douglas dive boat which allegedly abandoned missing American tourists Thomas and Eileen Lonergan at sea was charged with manslaughter.

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Plight of Iraqis prolonged

IRAQ'S DECISION yesterday to suspend cooperation with U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) weapons inspectors does not come as good news to any party in the region. While the move is simply the latest in a long campaign of accusations and bluffs involving Iraq, the U.N. and the United States, the eight-year routine of brinkmanship continues taking its heavy toll on the people in Iraq and other states affected directly or indirectly by the sanctions.

Iraq's grievances in its message announcing the break with UNSCOM included the results of Friday's Security Council meeting in which a comprehensive review of the sanctions was promised following a request from U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan. But the entire deal was effectively torpedoed by the U.S., which said the oil embargo on Iraq could not be lifted even if the country complied with the disarmament requirements stipulated in the 1991 cease-fire. The question then arises as to how unified the council is on what steps, specifically, have to be met before any embargoes will be lifted. It is not fair to introduce new conditions on a deal at a point when the old ones have been met to almost all the concerned parties' satisfaction.

But it is still difficult to see why Baghdad chose this moment to sever cooperation with the UNSCOM team in Iraq. Despite the just call for the lifting of the sanctions on humanitarian grounds, the decision has already alienated at least one country, France, sympathetic to Iraq's plight. The entire U.N. Security Council was scheduled to meet late yesterday to discuss possible measures in light of the move, and considering the positions of the U.S. and Britain, Iraq cannot afford to lose any allies in its struggle to have the sanctions lifted.

In addition, popular opinion the world over has now tilted in favour of lifting the sanctions. People everywhere, even in the U.S., where former officials are now speaking out against the sanctions, are aware of the humanitarian disaster that is taking place in Iraq. During the most recent crisis in February, negative public reaction in the small number of governments supporting the U.S. in its push for military action against Iraq took many by surprise.

Eight years under sanctions that have claimed over one million lives is a long time indeed. But Iraq cannot give the U.S. and Britain, whose policies have already proven that the entire populace of Iraq can go to hell until every last question is answered to their satisfaction, another excuse to prolong the sanctions. Too many lives depend on it.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Faneh criticised the government for signing an agreement with Egypt which aims to clarify the status of Egyptian workers in the Kingdom. Faneh said the government is depending on the Egyptian government to curb the soaring number of Egyptians seeking work in Jordan. Jordan should take the role of regulating its own labour market, he said. Jordan can prevent the Egyptian labour force entering the Kingdom without Egyptian help. The agreement stipulates that an Egyptian tourist must have a round trip ticket and at least \$150 in cash in order to be allowed in to the country, but these things are, according to Faneh, easy to get around. Moreover, Egyptians can come to Jordan from a third country which does not have similar agreement with Jordan. Egypt cannot prevent its people from travelling abroad, added Faneh. He said Jordan should follow the example of Saudi Arabia and organise its own labour market. Saudi Arabia did not need to conduct any deal with Jordan to combat their problem.

Al Dustour's Rakan Majali said negotiations on final status in the peace process between the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and Israel must take place only between those two parties, without the involvement of a third party. He said Jordan must not become the third party in upcoming talks — Palestinians should negotiate for their own rights — but Jordan's responsibility in supporting the PNA must be very clear. The close relationship between the two should be focused on promoting economic cooperation. Negotiating final status does concern Jordan, maybe more than any other country, but Jordan must exclude itself from these talks. Majali reaffirmed.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Will the euro influence Jordan?

Dr. Fahed Faneh

THE EURO is the single European currency which, over three years starting the first of January, 1999, will replace the national currencies in eleven European countries out of the fifteen members of the European Union (EU). This major step is meant to enhance and upgrade the unity of Europe, facilitate the exchange of goods and services, and coordinate and unify the monetary policies among all members of the union.

Official Jordanian sources announced recently that the introduction of the euro as of January 1, 1999 has only a limited effect on Jordan. In this respect, we might add that the impact of this new currency on Jordan at all, such influence will not be any different from the influence of any development that may take place with respect to the German mark or the French franc.

If anything, the unification of Europe's currencies is expected to reduce the fluctuations of single European currencies, because the euro is sort of an overall average with automatic fine tuning. It reflects the collective circumstances in many countries and accordingly will be more stable than any one of its country components or predecessor currencies, which used to be subjected to the circumstances prevailing in individual countries.

It is true that Jordan's debts to France, for example, will be payable after the year 2002 in euro instead of the French franc, but no one can tell in advance whether we shall be better off or worse off because of this shift. Fluctuation of currencies is a familiar phenomenon in today's world which we have learnt to live with a long time ago. What applies to the euro applies to the Japanese yen, the currency in which the largest part of Jordan's external debt is denominated. In our case, what happens to the yen has a greater impact than any other currency including the euro. We don't know in advance whether the cost of the yen or the euro will be higher or lower at the time of repayment than it is now. Everything depends on whether or not the exchange rate of this currency or that currency vis-a-vis the dollar will appreciate or depreciate in the future, assuming of course that the Jordan dinar will continue to be pegged to the dollar, which is the present intention of the authorities, with the blessings of the IMF.

As far as our foreign trade with the world is concerned, Jordan deals mainly in dollars. The dollar will definitely continue to be a major currency with universal acceptance. Every country will accept dollars even though its own official currency may be the mark, the franc, or the yen. The exchange rate of the dollar against these currencies fluctuates under the impact of future unforeseen developments and expectations. Chances that the dollar's exchange rate will rise or decline is left to the speculators, as it is not predictable with any measure of certainty.

Other factors being equal, the unification of eleven European currencies in a single currency will not, in itself, hurt or benefit Jordan. It does not change the real burden of its debt service, influence its imports and exports, or impact positively or negatively on its reserves of foreign exchange. The Central Bank may like to include the new euro in its reserves at the expense of the dollar because the euro will be a reserve currency, but that will only enhance the stability of the value of the reserves.

Who knows, the Central Bank of Jordan may, at one time in the future, decide to peg the JD to the euro instead of the dollar, especially when we have joined the Mediterranean partnership with the EU, and will become part of a free trade area with the European countries. If that happens, some commentators will start talking about the limited or non-existent influence of using one American currency — the dollar, among 50 states with one central bank — the Federal Reserve.



The demolition of Pakistan

By Gwynne Dyer

IF ONE of India's reasons for testing nuclear weapons last May was to complete the political and economic ruin of Pakistan, then the strategists in New Delhi can congratulate themselves. But they should also thank Pakistan's own Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, without whom the country might still have a chance.

Pakistan was a mess economically long before India's nuclear tests, but nobody was predicting that it would default on its debt. Thanks to the sanctions that were imposed on Pakistan after its copycat nuclear tests, however, the budget shortfall this year will be \$5 billion. And nobody will lend it the money to fill that hole.

India has lost at least as much income to sanctions, but India has seven times the population and an economy perhaps a dozen times as big — so India sails serenely on while Pakistan ends up on the rocks for following its example. That prospect doubtless occurred to the Indian strategists, but they could not have foreseen how helpful Sharif would be to them.

"Sharif has become so obsessed with survival," says Mandeepa Lodhi, editor of "The News", a Lahore-based national paper, "that he has taken out one insurance policy after another.... Formally, he is the most powerful prime minister in our history, but in fact he is presiding over... a state that has never been weaker."

What he means by "insurance policies" is that in only 20 months Sharif has hijacked all the institutions that used to be in a prime minister's power. The judiciary is now under his thumb, the president's right to dismiss prime ministers for misbehaviour has been removed, the army chief has been forced to retire early — and early this month Sharif imposed "Islamic law" on the country.

Patriotism, Sam Johnson observed two centuries ago, is the last refuge of a scoundrel. In Muslim countries nowadays, politicians in trouble often find that a sudden enthusiasm for "Islamic law" serves as well, especially if it takes the form of a constitutional amendment giving Islamic law priority over anything contained in the constitution, any law, or judgement of any court.

"It's not about Islam — it's about himself," said Lahore lawyer Asma Jehangir, United Nations rapporteur on human rights for Pakistan, about Sharif's imposition of Islamic law on a country where only five per cent of the voters backed fundamentalist parties in the last election. "It actual-

ly means a total repeal of the constitution," she explained, "to disguise his own mismanagement and to promote a fascist regime in the name of Islam."

Sharif has taken out "insurance policies" because since the death of dictator Zia ul-Haq in 1988 every elected government in Pakistan has

'Sharif only walks around a free man because he suspended the officers of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) who were looking into his finances when he won the election in 1996'

been removed by the president and the judiciary for corruption. His rival Benazir Bhutto was dismissed from the prime ministership twice, and he himself suffered the same fate in 1993.

Sharif doesn't want to face the same fate again — especially because he is deeply corrupt. He only walks around a free man because he suspended the officers of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) who were looking into his finances when he won the election in 1996 — so he cannot afford to lose office.

That's not to say that Bhutto, once hailed as the great hope of Pakistani democracy, is any better. In August, a Swiss judge froze her bank accounts in Switzerland and indicted her and her husband on money-laundering charges. They deny the charges, of course, but the evidence against them is very strong.

This gave Sharif little comfort, however, because in September the deputy head of the FIA, Rehman Malik, sent a 200-page report to the president accusing him of siphoning over \$50 million into secret off-shore bank accounts and London properties.

Malik, who was suspended from office on trumped-up corruption charges by Sharif in 1996 in an attempt to stop his investigation, spent a year in solitary confinement before being released by the High Court last November. He moved to England for safety after narrowly surviving a machine-gun assassination attempt in June.

Malik seems to have the goods on Sharif, including the cooperation of Pakistanis resident in Britain whose passports were borrowed by Sharif associates — to open U.S. bank accounts that contain many millions of dollars, as they subsequently discovered.

Sharif denies the charges as strenuously as Bhutto, but it's rather hard to explain how he and his six brothers could have amassed a fortune estimated at \$800 million by legal means since he first rose to high political office in 1988. Pakistan today is a country where the prime minister and the leader of the opposition should probably both be in jail for corruption.

It was probably that thought that made the army chief of staff, General Jehangir Karamat, propose on October 5 that the military should share power with the elected government in a national security council, in order to overcome the destabilising effects of "polarisation, vendettas, and insecurity-driven expedient policies." (The latter was a coded reference to Sharif's imposition of Islamic law.)

Sharif faced Karamat down, and the latter resigned three days later, but the army is not happy with the way things are going. Neither is the public — the euphoria after the May nuclear tests is long past — and so Sharif gathers dictatorial powers on the one hand while bringing the public with cash discounts on the other.

The most recent bribe was a 30 per cent cut on electricity bills, despite International Monetary Fund (IMF) advice that the charges must be raised. The IMF then postponed indefinitely its planned visit to Pakistan to discuss a loan, and Pakistan's default on about \$35 billion of foreign debt may follow as soon as next month.

Other imminent possibilities include a coup — or a deliberate intensification of the military confrontation with India on the disputed Kashmir border to distract people's attention from the domestic mess. This is not exactly the situation one would want in a very big, very poor country with newly acquired nuclear weapons.

The writer is a London-based journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries.

Hollywood's evil play

To the editor:

AS I read Mr. Hanania's article (Hollywood's Arab Terrorists — part 6, October) about the portrayal of Arab-Americans in Hollywood movies, I realised that if we substituted the word "Arab" for "Hispanic" and moved the stereotype words around a little, anyone with a non-white ethnic background could have shared Mr. Hanania's feelings.

You must have noticed that in Hollywood movies young Hispanic males are always portrayed as violent, drug-dealing, womanisers while older ones are usually gardeners or farm workers.

Hispanic women are not treated any better: Young ones are usually over-made up, wearing high heels and short skirts, while older Hispanic women are usually housekeepers. All Hispanics are shown as loud, violent individuals. Every Latin American city or country is shown as a dirty old town with chickens running about loose in its dusty streets.

Is all this a simple honest mistake on Hollywood's part? Are we being paranoid to imply that there are hidden messages here? The answer to both questions is "NO".

Actually everything that Hollywood does is carefully planned and thought out, from the simple little cartoon to the elaborate 2 1/2 hour hit movie. Life in the United States is so fast-paced that one barely has time to stop, pause and reflect on what has been shown in a movie.

Thus, these images or stereotypes become the American people's perception of what that particular culture is like. Because of Hollywood's strong influence in pop culture, what started out as pure fantasy, ignorance or prejudice becomes a reality in people's minds.

There lies the danger, and Hollywood is fully aware of what it's up to! Ask yourselves: Who owns Hollywood? Let me give you a hint: It is the same group that owns Wall Street and has incredible influence in the U.S. Congress... any guesses???

Marina Sanchez-Rashid
pines55@hotmail.com

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Features

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Paul Farhi and Megan Rosen

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The world welcomes America's cultural invasion

By Paul Farhi and Megan Rosenfeld

AMERICA'S BIGGEST export is no longer the fruit of its fields or the output of its factories, but the mass-produced products of its popular culture — movies and music, television programmes, books and computer software.

Entertainment around the world is dominated by American-made products. It's "The Young and the Restless" in New Delhi, Garth Brooks blaring from a Dublin apartment or the eager line of people waiting outside a Nairobi movie theatre to see "As Good as It Gets." It's Bart Simpson in Seoul, Madonna in Sao Paulo, "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman" in Warsaw.

International sales of software and entertainment products totalled \$60.2 billion in 1996, more than any other U.S. industry, according to Commerce Department data and industry figures. Since 1991, when the collapse of the Soviet Union opened new markets around the world to the United States, total exports of intellectual property from the United States have risen nearly 94 per cent in dollar terms, these statistics indicate. That does not include the untold billions of dollars in revenue lost each year to illegal copying.

While intellectuals debate the benefits and disadvantages of this dominance, the penetration of U.S. culture in a post-cold war world in which scores of countries have abandoned state controls for policies of free trade and free markets is beyond dispute. The sociologist Todd Gitlin calls American popular culture "the latest in a long succession of bidders for global unification."

"It succeeds the Latin imposed by the Roman Empire and the Catholic Church, and Marxist Leninism" imposed by Communist governments, he said.

Tom Freston, president of MTV, the globe-straddling music network, sees it another way. "Today's young people have passports to two different worlds — to their own culture and to ours," he said.

Once, back when "I Love Lucy" was still in its first run, U.S.-made entertainment could be found only in places with the means to buy it, the technology to show it and the political freedom to allow it across the border. Now, even in tiny Bhutan, a Himalayan nation so isolated that fewer than 5,000 people visit it a year, street peddlers offer illegally copied videos of Hollywood's latest blockbusters.

The spread of made-in-America pop follows several larger worldwide trends. At the most basic level, virtually every nation has grown richer over the past 10 years, despite the recent

economic turbulence in some parts of the world. This halo of prosperity has provided two necessary ingredients for the entertainment boom: Leisure time and disposable income.

Consumer wealth, in turn, has fuelled a worldwide surge in the sales of television sets, VCRs, stereos, personal computers and satellite dishes. It also has prompted increased investment in quasi-public entertainment facilities such as movie theatres and cable systems around the world.

Hungary, for example, had no cable television at the start of the decade: now 40 per cent of its households can watch the news on CNN or Hanson videos on MTV.

A distinctly American invention — the multiplex movie theatre — has been popping up all across Europe, Asia and Latin America. England alone will add 1,000 screens by the turn of the century. In Poland, the number of movie screens is projected to rise by a third over the next four years, according to Dodona Research, a European firm. And the Blockbuster Entertainment Corp. video chain has 2,000 outlets in 26 foreign countries; Tower Records has 70 stores in 15 countries.

At the same time, new, privately owned television stations or networks have gone on the air in Russia, Malaysia, Israel, Greece, Norway, Finland and in the former Soviet satellites of Eastern Europe that once had only state-owned television monopolies. As recently as 1991, India, home to nearly a billion people, had only the dry, state-run Doordarshan network; now satellite television rains down a dozen more channels to the subcontinent.

In Cuba, which has long tried to eradicate the "stain" of American influence, illegal home satellite dishes have sprouted like aluminium flowers along the northern coast, pulling down sports, news and entertainment programmes emanating from the capitalist Goliath. In Greece, 50 unlicensed TV stations play almost nothing but American movies and television programmes, many of them pirated.

The United States is on the news-stand as well. Reader's Digest circulates in 19 languages; its 48 international editions, with a combined circulation of 28 million, dwarf its U.S. circulation of 14.7 million. Cosmopolitan magazine now claims to be the world's best-selling women's magazine, with international sales of 4.5 million from 36 foreign editions and domestic circulation of about 2.7 million. Playboy, not to be outdone, has 16 international editions with an estimated readership of 5 million.

Foreigners see U.S. popular culture inter-

twined with fast food restaurants, T-shirts, pricey sneakers and shopping malls, even though these exports are not classified as intellectual property. The McDonald's restaurants that are opening at a rate of six a day around the world, the baggy jeans and baseball caps that have become a global teenage uniform, the Barbie dolls and Hot Wheels increasingly demanded by children, are all seen as part of the same U.S. invasion.

'Playboy has an estimated worldwide readership of five million; McDonald's restaurants open at a rate of six per day, baggy jeans and baseball caps have become a global teenage uniform'

Global consumerism and expanding channels of distribution may create more demand for entertainment, but neither says much about why people around the world prefer the American variety to that produced in, say, Venezuela or Japan or France.

The answer is partly linguistic, partly economic — a reflection of the unique historical, racial and ideological development of the United States.

U.S. products enjoy the competitive advantage of being created in English, the first or second language of choice for almost all of the developed world and much of the developing world. Films produced in English annually account for between 60 and 65 per cent of the global box office, according to the Motion Picture Association of America: most of these ticket sales are generated by American-made films. Producing in English gives a film immediate entry to some of the biggest movie markets in the world. After the United States, the Motion Picture Association lists the United

Kingdom, Canada and Australia among the 10 largest for film revenues.

U.S. films and recordings also are favoured in places where English is not spoken much. In El Salvador last year, made-in-America jazz, New Age and rock music accounted for 40 per cent of all music sales, according to Fernando Aguilar, who owns one of that nation's largest chains of music stores.

This leads to the inevitable chicken-and-egg question: Is American pop riding on the coattails of English or is it causing the spread of English around the world?

Sometimes, it is hard to know which is which. Indian youths, raised on years of American music, now paper their conversations with words like "cool," "chill" and "happening," all used in their slang form. The desire to appear more American has prompted shop owners in Latin America to add an apostrophe to their stores' names — a seemingly trivial change, except that the possessive "s" does not exist in Spanish. The printing on a French McDonald's Happy Meal box is in English. English is the language of cyberspace and of international meetings.

Surprisingly, one of the most eager markets for all things American is Vietnam, the United States' enemy for three decades. Since President Bill Clinton normalised relations in 1995, Vietnamese have begun learning English in huge numbers. They are also listening to American rock songs in American-style bars and restaurants.

American entertainment conglomerates such as Time Warner Inc. and Walt Disney Co. have long enjoyed a huge scale advantage over their foreign competitors, which enables them to produce more and bigger movies and TV shows.

For decades, the U.S. companies have consistently been able to mount the most expensive productions in the world, for a home market that is the wealthiest and most voracious entertainment consumer. The mighty cash flows that U.S. companies enjoy from their wealthy, continent-wide market supply the financial muscle to buy the latest film-making technology, and to cram even more stars, costumes and crowd-pleasing special effects into their products.

No foreign company has been able to keep up in this cultural arms race. Nor can they match the worldwide distribution and marketing apparatus of the seven U.S.-based movie and TV "majors" — Disney, Warner Bros., MGM-UA, Sony Pictures, Paramount, Universal and 20th Century Fox. Sony, Universal and Fox are owned, respectively, by companies in

Japan, Canada and Australia. Although French, German and Danish companies were early pioneers of the film business, today no entertainment company outside the United States is capable of distributing a movie to all of the nations of Europe, according to David Putnam, the former head of Columbia Pictures, which is owned by Sony.

Beyond its glitz and gloss, its sex, speed and violence, U.S. popular culture sells abroad, observers say, because it reflects many of the appealing themes and myths of the United States itself: Individuality, wealth, progress, tolerance, optimism.

Said Mr. Gitlin, the sociologist, "we are good at producing themes and story lines that appeal to a global sensibility: Freedom, freedom of movement, freedom from family, from place, from earth, from roles."

A television director and scriptwriter, Alexander Singer, pointed to the proletarian roots of American storytelling, the amalgam of immigrant experiences that portrayed sympathy with the struggles of the common man. "Many of our earlier movies said universal things about courage and sensitivity in the face of awful deprivation," he said, adding that American movies "offer the magical possibilities of transformation."

To its admirers, this makes U.S. entertainment something bright and new and attractively upbeat. "The United States has little history and it is very open to new things," said David Escobar Galindo, El Salvador's foremost writer. "Europe has many wonderful things, but it is very tied to its past."

Jack Lang, a former French minister of culture who is known for his protectionist views, appreciates U.S. culture as "pure entertainment" that "finds the soul of the child in the adult."

There has long been another view, of course. To religious conservatives of all denominations, American culture is still the noisy electronic spawn of the Great Satan, undermining traditional values and encouraging wickedness. U.S. movies and television promote mindless consumerism, others complain, and emit a toxic vapour that chokes the wellspring of native creativity.

But the outright rejection of all things American has cooled substantially since the end of the cold war, when all forms of U.S. culture were branded decadent by anti-Americans and hard-line Communists. America's goods generally are welcomed today, but not without some lingering and justifiable caution.

— International Herald Tribune

Books

October blues and the wounds of war

War in the land of Egypt
By Yusuf Al Qa'id
Interlink Books, Emerging
Voices, 1998

YUSUF AL QA'ID wrote his most acclaimed novel "War in the Land of Egypt" in 1975. It was banned in its own country and was first published in Beirut. It wasn't until 1985 when the ban was finally lifted, but by that time the novel had already been translated into several languages including Russian and Ukrainian.

The ban might not have come as a surprise to the author, since the basic essence of this novel — which takes place during the 1973 October war — was to expose the irony of a country that fiercely fought its foreign enemies, yet was incapable of dealing with its own corrupt nationals who enslaved Egypt to satisfy personal objectives. The only justification for the ban was that those were critical times; Egypt could not afford to expose its weak fabric. Alternatively, it could be inferred that this novel was so brutally honest that it took ten years to finally be able to acknowledge its contents.

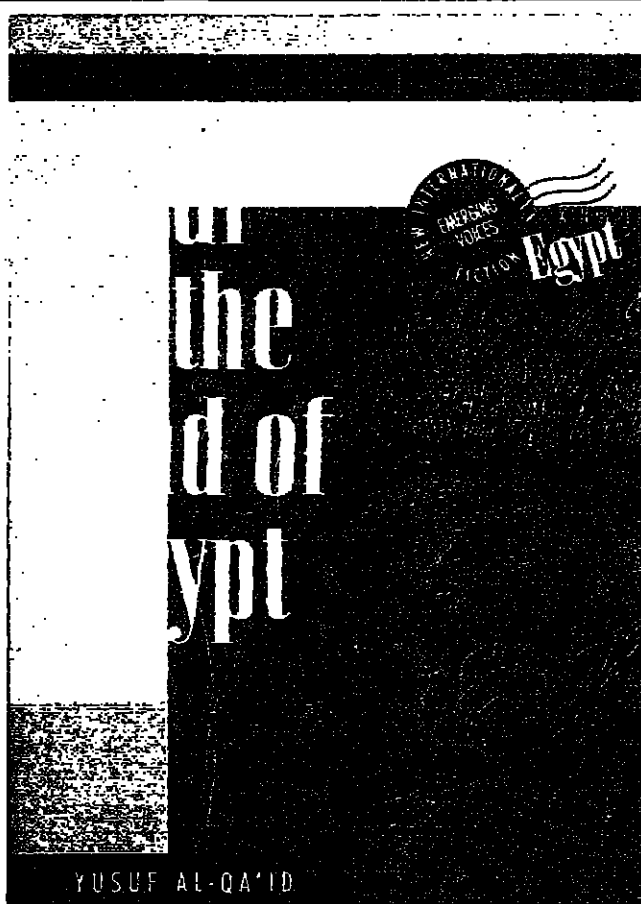
The story begins in 1973 on the eve of the October war. The elder of a small village "Umda" has just received a court's verdict to return to his land which was nationalised during Jamal Abdul Nasser's regime. But his joy is immediately spoiled when his youngest son is called up for military service. After reviewing all methods to prevent this from happening, the "Umda" decides to exploit his night-watchman by persuading him to send his only son "Masri" — the name in Arabic means "Egyptian" — as a stand-in for the "Umda's" son. The

night-watchman fears that refusal would cost him the land he was working on, because it belonged to the Umda, and therefore he is compelled to sacrifice "Masri" to save the poor, wretched family. The plan gets exposed when "Masri" dies in the battlefield. But because of the "Umda's" influential connections and the volatile political situation, the interrogation is terminated without indictment and "Masri" is buried under a false name, thus depriving his family of the money issued by the army to the deceased's beneficiaries, and depriving "Masri" himself of being remembered as a martyr who fought in place of a more fortunate man.

The novel revolves around the classical tragedy of a society dominated by a corrupted hierarchy, whose shady patriotism is dismissed at the most crucial times to expose the ugliest forms of selfishness and greed. In this book, Al Qa'id explains how society connected wealth with political and even religious superiority, thus transforming Egypt into "a cat that mercilessly eats its own young" p. 128. The book also explores the irony of life in granting redeeming qualities to those with limited choices. "Masri" is a very intelligent man with a promising educational record, his mother even describes him as "a cake in an orphan's hand" p. 88. But poverty forbids him from continuing his studies and compels him to sacrifice his name and identity yet with no gains.

Al Qa'id chooses to record these events in a fragmented manner, allowing for several characters in the book to narrate the events relevant to each of them.

Ranging from key players in



the plot such as the "Umda" and "Masri's" father, to secondary onlookers such as the investigator and "Masri's" friend, the narrators collaborate in what seems to be a trial where they make personal contact with readers to gradually unfold the story exposing its multiple dimensions. One remarkable factor is that in this almost theatrical prose, apart from "Masri" none of the characters has a name, yet "Masri" is the only one who has no chapter to recount his own story. It might be inferred that since he was the scapegoat he could not have a say in his own tragedy. Instead, his passive presence is given some personal exposure in the chapter where his friend recounts their relationship. He describes "Masri" as a man full of contradictions, he's naive and suspicious at the same time because "he'd accepted the world unthinkingly, but when he clashed with his reality his whole world was filled with uncertainty" p. 109. Even when he decides to go into the battlefield, it remains unknown whether he does so because of his national duty or as a protest over his personal misfortunes.

Al Qa'id's novel enjoys one commodity seldom found in Arabic literature: the writer relies on the fact that the story is tragic in itself, and thus refrains from using excessively tragic language or symbols. He even deliberately avoids going into the most distressing details such as the fight between "Masri" and his family where he finally bows to their demands, or "Masri's" death. Al Qa'id chose to simply recount these situations in small, indifferent sentences. On the other hand, he opts to demonstrate his inventive brilliance by delving into unusual situations where he best exposes the ironies of his story: when "Masri's" father recounts how he knelt down to kiss the Umda's hand, the feeling of the flesh on the hand reminded him of the last time he ever tasted meat!

"War in the Land of Egypt" is brutally honest, its inventive structure and contents mark it out as a landmark in modern Egyptian literature.

The book was made available for review courtesy of the Philadelphia Bookstore.

— Dima Hamdan

Travelogue with a difference

The Arab World: Forty Years of Change
By Elizabeth Warnock Fernea and Robert A. Fernea
New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1997. 552 pages, \$15.95

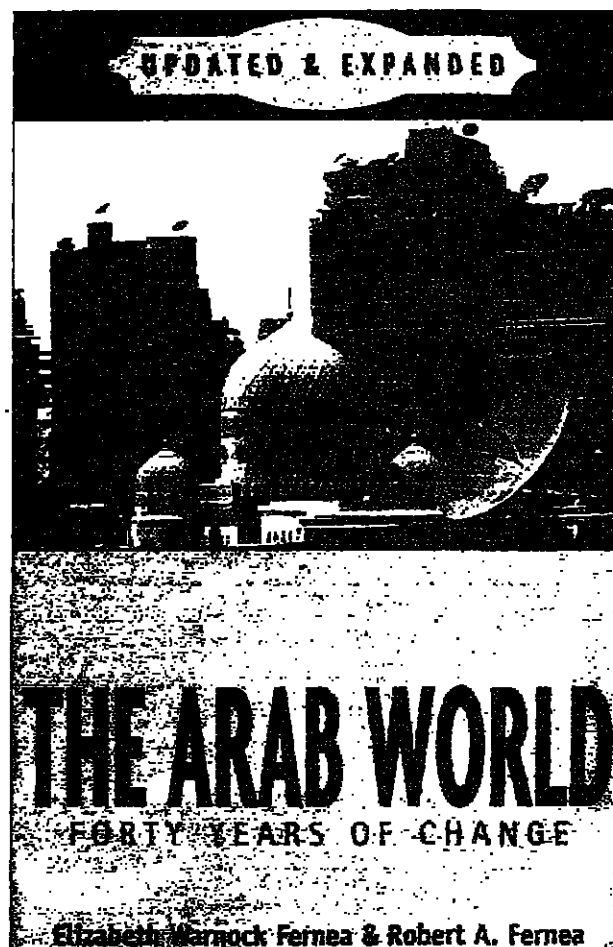
CO-AUTHORED BY a husband-and-wife team, "The Arab World" is an intriguing mix of travelogue, topical essays, personal reminiscences, historical background and socio-cultural observations. Elizabeth Fernea is a professor of English literature; Robert Fernea is an anthropology professor. Since his fieldwork took them to Iraq in 1956, they have returned repeatedly to the Arab World. This book contains their impressions over successive decades, covering Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Israel and the West Bank, and Iraq. It is an updated edition of "The Arab World: Personal Encounters", which the Ferneas published in 1985, adding the perspective of the 90s.

The Ferneas write with a purpose: "Out of our concern over the incomplete images, even stereotypes, that Americans have of Arabs, and out of our concern with the ongoing processes of change that are affecting us in America as well as in the Arab World, we have written this book" (p. xvi). The book does well in countering stereotypes by presenting vivid, personalised accounts of Arab people's daily lives and aspirations.

Concerning the processes of change, the sections on Morocco, Egypt and Iraq are outstanding. Having lived in each of these countries for two years or more, the Ferneas are well-equipped to make thought-provoking assessments, starting from the premise that: "Since 1962, when the colonial period officially ended and a group of new independent nations emerged, the Arab World has been forced to absorb in less than two generations the social and technological transformations that took more than two hundred years to become part of Western society" (p. xvii).

Taking Marrakech as an example, the Ferneas discuss the implications of the

traditional market (suq) being replaced by modern shopping centres: "More is lost than simply a variety of handmade objects... what is being lost is an important centre for the formation of a community: Of leadership and of consensus over matters ranging from religious and political concerns to the proper conduct of business." Plus, the two styles of



markets "can only reinforce the growing gap between rich and poor" (p. 176).

Having arrived in Egypt in 1959, the Ferneas evaluate the sweeping impact of Nasserism — and its aftermath — including resettlement of the Nubians who were displaced by the Aswan Dam. But most striking among the changes they note is labour migration: "In 1959 it was commonly stated that Egyptian fellahs, or peasants, would never leave Egypt..." Yet by the time the Ferneas returned in 1981, mass migration was a fact, creating "a new social order," in the words of one Egyptian social scientist. "The sharing

of everyday life by people for whom no language barriers exist and among whom Islam is a common faith is producing a new international Arab community of a far more substantive nature than that conceived by Gamal Abdel Nasser, who popularised the idea of political Pan-Arabism" (pp. 300-304).

In Iraq, the Ferneas had a rare experience for Westerners, spending their first two years of married life in a mudbrick house in a remote southern village. Return visits in the 80s and 90s led them to examine the impact of modernisation on tribal structure there.

Though the authors' personal approach makes for absorbing reading, at times their reluctance to deal directly with political issues is puzzling. In Lebanon, the legacy of recurring wars permeates the lives of all those they encounter, but there are only hints as to the causes of the violence. Concerning Palestine/Israel, the Ferneas put themselves firmly on the side of peace, but at the same time make uncritical mention of Israeli security concerns, failing, it seems, to see that "security" is often a guise for repressing any Palestinian attempt at independent development. In the section on Iraq, the Ferneas express opposition to the sanctions, but this is almost an aside, and the section is written in a way that downplays this rather major aspect of people's lives.

Is it academic criteria that got in the way? Or were the Ferneas afraid to buck the prevailing anti-Saddam and pro-Israeli sentiments in the U.S.? It's hard to know.

The Ferneas' brief visits to Jordan, in 1981 and 1996, did not allow for real depth in assessing changes, but their impressions are interesting. Their first visit included an audience with King Hussein and Queen Noor. The second time they visited Dana. Over 10 pages are devoted to describing the nature preserve's stunning beauty and the people who work there — probably the first detailed coverage of the project in such a book.

— Sally Bland

Book Review

REUTERS REUTER

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has not improved in real

The seven million Buenos Aires residents with monthly income below 1,000 pesos account for an estimated 2.2 million house-

Yesterday's Jumbles: GUARD SUEDE HELMET ATTACK

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Aqel outlines hindrances for not achieving aspired growth under adjustment programme

"THE ECONOMIC adjustment programme has succeeded in achieving the easy part of financial and monetary stability and in alleviating a situation which could have become worse," said a senior Jordanian banker in a recent lecture. "But, the real issues needing solutions were not tackled by the adjustment policies and that led to a high social cost."

Mufleh Aqel, regional director at the Arab Bank headquarters in Amman, analysed how and when economic reform would succeed on a wider scale but, first, stressed that he would neither blame the government, the policies, laws and regulations or even the financial system because all of them were criticised and accused beyond their responsibilities. "I believe that the private sector is as responsible as the official institutions for the decline in economic growth."

"We all agree that economic growth is strongly connected to the sound overall economic fundamentals and to the low political risk as well stability, security and laws that guarantee the rights," Aqel told the audience. "Accordingly I dare list the following points for not achieving the aspired growth":

1- The adjustment programmes based on the World Bank model are good to achieve stability in the short term but not capable to achieve long-term growth because they are based on openness and liberalisation that no developing state can face their requirements.

2- The countries that were able to attain fast growth, whether in the past or at present, did not achieve it in a climate of total openness. To the contrary, the fast growth was achieved within a protection system as was the experience in South East Asia, Japan and even the United States.

3- The states which achieved success were committed to serious work. A Japanese is

dedicated to work and for the organisation. A Korean works hard for long hours for modest pay and a Taiwanese starts work early in the morning and does not stop except late at night.

4- Transparency and accountability have helped achieve administrative integrity and control because without accountability and transparency administrations would not be efficient.

5- Education and training are basic elements for achieving success as without advanced education and skilled labour high productivity cannot be attained.

6- Separation of administration and capital investment would enable the qualified personnel and experts to carry out the role that they are capable to handle.

7- The need to practically balance between currency stability and growth rates as one side should not be sacrificed in favour of the other.

8- The importance of consolidating organisational and competitive capabilities because they are the only means for survival in a very stiff competition environment.

9- The media should carry out its role of monitoring the performance of economic sector especially the public shareholding companies which are owned by the public and not the management of the firms.

10- Activating the laws that fight corruption as that is the right measure to stop irresponsible actions.

11- Wrong investment patterns which focus on construction that lead to growth during the building stage but become a burden at later stages. 12- Creation of too many similar institutions leads to mass failures instead of a limited number of successful entities.

This also is a drain of the national capital (Al Aswaq + Al Rai + Al Dastour).

S. Africa Egypt, sign accords

CAIRO (R) — Egypt and South Africa have signed bilateral economic and investment accords and tackled obstacles, such as dumping, which have hindered trade.

The agreements between the two countries are part of Egypt's pursuit of stronger political and economic ties with other countries to translate them into more trade and investment.

"We share a vision of our continent. A vision of an African renaissance, which entails...most importantly economic self-reliance," said South Africa's Minister of Public Works Jeff Radebe in a speech.

"Cooperation is vital to the realisation of this vision. Let all of us pool our resources and combine our capabilities," he added.

Egypt and South Africa signed three agreements on investment protection, maritime cooperation and trade.

The two countries are also promoting private joint ventures.

A South African official said there could be cooperation in gold, which South Africa produces but does not finish into jewellery.

Hopeful traders descend on Baghdad

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Baghdad's trade fair this week is drawing Arab ministers and businessmen vying for oil-for-food contracts and closer economic ties with the sanctions-hit state despite a U.N. embargo.

It is the first time since the start of sanctions eight years ago that the Iraqi capital has managed to attract such a large number of ministers and several hundred businessmen.

Thirty countries are participating in the fair itself, which opens Sunday, including France, Italy, Spain, Turkey and 13 Arab states. In all, the fair is now up to about half the size it was before sanctions were imposed after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

This "illustrates the will of countries and companies to establish economic ties with Iraq," said the director of the company organising

the fair, Fawzi Daher.

As well as attracting old partners, the fair is also drawing new business, with Oman, Bulgaria, Argentina and Yugoslavia participating for the first time.

Most are coming in a bid to grab contracts under the U.N. oil-for-food programme that currently allows Iraq to sell \$5.2 billion worth of crude every six months in return for humanitarian supplies.

Iraq is also allowed to buy a limited quantity of spare parts for its tottering oil industry so that it can reach its oil export targets.

The French pavilion, for instance, holds 30 firms exhibiting food products, electronics and oil industry equipment.

France and Iraq have agreed to step up trade under the food-for-oil deal and also after any lifting of U.N. sanctions, Iraqi Trade Minister Mohammad Med-

hdi Saleh said Wednesday during a visit to Paris.

The Spanish pavilion's exhibitors include representatives from the food, communications and medical sectors.

The United Arab Emirates' pavilion holds 28 national firms and four from Saudi Arabia, which is not participating in the fair.

Emirati officials who will be present at the fair include Sultan Ibn Sulayem, president of the Dubai Ports Authority and several members of the country's chambers of commerce.

Tunisia's Trade Minister Mondher Zneidi is already in Baghdad and on Saturday told local newspapers his country wanted to strengthen trade ties with the sanctions-hit state.

The ties would be within "the oil-for-food programme or other projects in the future," he said in refer-

ence to a future lifting of the embargo.

His Iranian counterpart, Mohammad Shariatmadari, and Iraqi Trade Minister Mohammad Mahdi Saleh held talks Thursday that covered "the development of economic and trade exchanges," the official INA news agency said.

Shariatmadari, who is heading a 37-member delegation, said his country "wants to strengthen trade relations with Iraq."

Syrian Industry Minister Ahmad Nizameddin, whose country's ties with Iraq began improving in 1997, was also in Baghdad for the fair.

"The goal of my visit is to examine ways to develop bilateral ties in both countries' interests," he said.

The Lebanese Trade Minister and Turkish Minister of State Mehmet Batalli are also expected to attend the fair.

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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 31/10/1998

| PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH | PAST 12 MONTHS LOW | COMPANY'S NAME | P/E | DIV. | NO. OF SHARES | NO. OF TRADED | VALUE TRADED JD | OPEN PRICE | CLOSE PRICE | CHANGE |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------|-------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|--------|
| \$ 355,500 | 170,000 | ARAB BANK | 16.8 | -0.98 | 3 | 70 | 14265 | 203.00 | 205.00 | 2.00+ |
| 1,920 | 1,500 | JOR. NATIONAL BK. | 12.6 | 4.52 | 9 | 5637 | 8736 | 1.55 | 1.55 | - |
| \$ 2,680 | 1,476 | INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK. | 10.2 | 7.15 | 4 | 1500 | 2185 | 1.47 | 1.45 | -0.02 |
| \$ 6,510 | 2,610 | THE HOUSING BK. | 17.2 | 3.68 | 8 | 2800 | 7616 | 2.71 | 2.72 | 0.01+ |
| -790 | -530 | JOR. GULF BANK | 9 | 0.00 | 18 | 30800 | 18805 | 0.60 | 0.62 | 0.02+ |
| \$ 3,910 | 1,540 | JOR. ISLAMIC BANK | 16.4 | 0.00 | 9 | 1950 | 2124 | 1.59 | 1.61 | 0.02+ |
| -970 | -670 | BEIT AL-HAL (BEITNA) | 3.3 | 0.00 | 3 | 1750 | 1170 | 0.67 | 0.67 | - |
| -850 | -590 | PHILADEL. INV. BK. | P | 0.00 | 1 | 500 | 300 | 0.61 | 0.60 | -0.01- |

| BANK SECTOR TOTALS | | INDEX: 269.79 | | %CHG: +0.82 | | 55 | 45007 | 56200 | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------|------|----|-------|-------|------|------|-------|
| \$ | 2,240 | 1,410 | JOR. ELECTRIC POW. | 9.2 | 5.81 | 8 | 3550 | 5041 | 1.42 | 1.42 | - |
| | 1,200 | 620 | INTL. PORTFOLIO | 29.1 | 0.00 | 4 | 1050 | 767 | .72 | .73 | .01+ |
| | 1,120 | 680 | REAL ESTATE INV. | 14.1 | 0.00 | 1 | 1100 | 792 | .72 | .72 | - |
| | 680 | 260 | JORDAN INTL. TRAD. | 9 | 0.00 | 1 | 150 | 39 | .27 | .26 | -.01- |
| \$ | 4,600 | 1,870 | ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC. | 9.4 | 2.12 | 3 | 10750 | 20298 | 1.89 | 1.89 | - |
| SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS | | | | | | | | | | | |

| SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS | INDEX: 104.14 | %CHG: +0.03 | 17 | 16600 | 26936 | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| 4,110 | 1,050 | JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES | 12.9 | 0.00 | 18 | 22100 | 26313 | 1.16 | 1.22 | .06+ |
| + 6,500 | 3,450 | ARAB POTASH CO. | 15.7 | 5.88 | 1 | 150 | 510 | 3.45 | 3.40 | -.05- |
| 11,250 | 10,050 | JOR. PETROL. REFINERY | 9.8 | 8.77 | 18 | 990 | 10039 | 10.15 | 10.13 | -.02- |
| 1,450 | 1,150 | INDUSTRIAL COMM. AG. | 66.2 | 0.00 | 2 | 250 | 280 | 1.18 | 1.12 | -.06- |
| 5,740 | 2,400 | ARAB FARM. MARK. | 7.1 | 2.93 | 21 | 5420 | 13859 | 2.56 | 2.56 | - |
| 6,350 | 4,700 | DIR. ALDAMA DV. INV. | 6.1 | 6.93 | 4 | 688 | 3473 | 5.05 | 5.05 | - |
| 530 | 350 | LIVESTOCK & POULTRY | 12.5 | 0.00 | 8 | 2850 | 1055 | 0.37 | 0.37 | - |
| 710 | 370 | LIVESTOCK & POULTRY | 12.5 | 0.00 | 8 | 2850 | 1055 | 0.37 | 0.37 | - |
| 1,760 | 760 | NATIONAL STEEL IND. | 9 | 0.00 | 6 | 10650 | 5095 | 0.48 | 0.48 | - |
| \$ 2,090 | 630 | HAZ. CABLE WIRE. MFG. | 30.9 | 0.00 | 1 | 1250 | 1307 | 1.06 | 1.06 | -.04-.02- |
| 1,470 | 1,150 | ARAB PHARM. CHEM. | 13.2 | 5.00 | 4 | 950 | 1140 | 1.20 | 1.20 | - |
| + 650 | 380 | KAMBER INVEST. | 9 | 0.00 | 2 | 1350 | 500 | 0.38 | 0.37 | -.01- |
| \$ 1,240 | 530 | UNIV. CHEM. INDUS. | 9 | 0.00 | 11 | 3750 | 5485 | 0.42 | 0.42 | - |
| 880 | 420 | JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES | 9 | 0.00 | 77 | 5750 | 3450 | 0.60 | 0.60 | - |
| 1,080 | 600 | JOR. KEM. CABLE CO. | 8.5 | 16.67 | 8 | 9550 | 5730 | 0.60 | 0.60 | - |
| 1,310 | 910 | INT'L. TOBACCO | 7.5 | 5.45 | 3 | 500 | 535 | 1.08 | 1.07 | -.01- |
| 890 | 640 | JORDAN STEEL | 9.5 | 8.24 | 2 | 1050 | 893 | 0.85 | 0.85 | - |
| 730 | 580 | NAT. ADMINIST. | 33.2 | 0.00 | 9 | 3800 | 2576 | 0.67 | 0.67 | - |
| 1,100 | 870 | ARAB INT. FOOD FACT. | 52.1 | 0.00 | 5 | 2437 | 2314 | 0.95 | 0.95 | - |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|-----|--------|--------|
| INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS | INDEX: 71.30 | %CHG: -0.28 | 211 | 206996 | 134978 |
| GRAND TOTAL | INDEX: 161.82 | %CHG: +0.52 | 283 | 268603 | 218114 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------------------------|------|-------|----|-------|-------|------|------|--------|
| PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 31/10/1998 | | | | | | | | | | |
| \$ 1,050 | 790 | EXPORT & FIN. BKK. 751 | 10.2 | 0.00 | 5 | 16200 | 8910 | 0.80 | 0.80 | - |
| 1,230 | 1,000 | ISLAMIC INSURANCE CO | P | 0.00 | 1 | 250 | 290 | 1.10 | 1.16 | 0.06+ |
| 780 | 500 | JOR. TRAD. FAC. | 9 | 0.00 | 4 | 4000 | 1480 | 0.38 | 0.37 | -0.01- |
| -720 | -500 | UNION INV. | 9 | 0.00 | 4 | 20500 | 11080 | 0.54 | 0.55 | 0.01+ |
| -620 | -210 | ARAB FIN. INVEST. | 9 | 0.00 | 1 | 2000 | 440 | 0.22 | 0.22 | - |
| 1,100 | 1,050 | FALCON INV. & FIN. CO. | 9 | 0.00 | 1 | 100 | 115 | 1.10 | 1.15 | 0.05+ |
| 200 | 090 | JOR. TRAD. FAC. - JEMCO | 9 | 0.00 | 1 | 400 | 56 | 0.14 | 0.14 | - |
| -600 | -270 | ARAB FOOD & MED. | 9 | 0.00 | 1 | 1000 | 280 | 0.29 | 0.28 | -0.01- |
| 490 | 480 | MIDEAST PHARM. 90X | 9 | 0.00 | 8 | 22500 | 8325 | 0.49 | 0.47 | -0.02- |
| 320 | 190 | INDUS. ENG. | 9 | 0.00 | 6 | 2150 | 452 | 0.22 | 0.21 | -0.01- |
| 850 | 530 | ADVANCED PHARM. IND. | 9 | 0.00 | 9 | 600 | 312 | 0.53 | 0.52 | -0.01- |
| 950 | 310 | OPTICAL HEARING CO. | 9 | 0.00 | 1 | 200 | 64 | 0.34 | 0.32 | -0.02- |
| 1,310 | 610 | NUTRIDAR | P | 0.00 | 20 | 8650 | 5889 | 0.68 | 0.67 | -0.01- |
| 1,000 | 690 | AL-EKHAL PRINTING CO | 11.0 | 10.52 | 6 | 5450 | 3924 | 0.71 | 0.72 | 0.01+ |

1: New 12 months high
2: New 12 months low
3: Stock dividend during the past 12 months
4: Listed during the past 12 months
P: P/E ratio is 100 or more
Q: Negative P/E
Z: Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Today you step forth proudly proclaiming exactly how you feel. Your opinions don't surprise anyone.

You're not very good at keeping them hidden. The truth is always your primary objective, and today, you might tell it even to your disadvantage. Leave descriptions of other people's character for another time, however.

Taurus: (April 20 to May 20) There could be a row today between two passionate people. You're not dumb enough to get caught in the middle. If somebody asks you to referee, do so on the condition the others listen to what you say and mind you without question. They'll probably just leave you alone and you can go on about your business.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Mercury is going into Sagittarius today, directly across the zodiac from Gemini. Opposites attract, and also stimulate each other. With your ruling planet in that sign, you'll be a little more philosophical than usual, to your advantage. You'll see the big picture, which comes in handy. It'll also make you very attractive to a person you admire.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 22) An older person needs a lot of attention, but that's OK. You can take care of whatever is required. Don't be put off by a nasty tone of voice. The other person is probably not mad at you, just under other pressure. But you can help. Soothing words and a gentle voice are a good way to start the therapy.

LEO: (July 23 to August 22) It could be that company is coming over, or something else keeps you stuck at home. The far horizon beckon, however. What to do? Well, there's got to be a compromise, and it looks like a loved one or a child is going to think of it. So offer your dilemma to the family for discussion.

VIRGO: (August 23 to September 22) Today you want to find a quiet place and hide away with the ones you love. There's so much activity going on, however, that it may not be possible. Don't get upset if your quiet interlude turns into a noisy free-for-all. One of your best talents is that you're adaptable; today, that'll come in very handy.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Try not to get into

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

a hassle with your partner, especially if money is involved. There's tension in the air but it's not your fault. It's just the way things are. You'd really be better off keeping your mouth shut. Don't offer any suggestions. Let the other person figure out how to solve the problem solo.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Even volunteer work can be stressful on a day like this. Don't take what another says too seriously. A person who's not thinking ahead could get you into trouble. Instead of letting that happen, do the planning yourself. A stitch in time saves nine, and today it could also help you prevent a roaring headache.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This is a good day for travel. A loved one might want to come along, and that would make it even nicer. Take a jaunt to the next town over to run errands, and you'll make the best of these conditions. You'll probably find just what you're looking for, too.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) You'd just as soon stay home today and take life easy. Looks like there's a party going on, however. How about having them all over to your place? Don't worry that you can't afford it. Make it pot luck. They won't mind. Better put away your breakables, though. Looks like this one could get kind of rowdy.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 18) Toss the ball to your partner today. He or she is more likely to score. If you're not playing a game, maybe you should be. It looks like you may be taking yourself too seriously again. That's just because you've got some pressure on now. Don't try to do everything yourself. Let somebody else carry your load for a while.

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) You've been lucky lately, but don't toss your money around. You like to buy presents for others, and that's sweet, but don't go over budget or waste money on strangers. Give your gifts to the right person and they'll come back ten fold. In other words, lavish money and attention on someone appreciates you.

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Krajicek maintains career edge on Sampras

STUTTGART (AFP) — Dutchman Richard Krajicek continued his career-long edge over Pete Sampras, upsetting the World No. 1 6-7 (2/7), 6-4, 7-6 (7/5) on Saturday to book a spot in the final of the \$2.45 million Eurocard Open.

Sampras had been hoping to assure himself some breathing space in the year-end chase for the season-ending No. 1 ranking, but Krajicek, seeded 11th, made the comfort zone disappear in the one-hour, 55-minute defeat.

Sampras still has a chance to rewrite the tennis records by claiming No. 1 status for the sixth consecutive year next month.

He is top seed next week at the Paris Indoor Open, his last tournament before the ATP World Championships in Hanover, Germany, which is limited to the top eight players in the world.

Krajicek will play Sunday in a best-of-five final against either Swede Jonas Bjorkman or Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov.

The Dutchman is the only man in the Top 10 to own a winning career edge over Sampras. His record against the American stood at 4-2 coming into the semi-final at the Hans Martin Schleyer Halle.

Sampras last beat Krajicek in Paris four years ago.

"I was able to serve well," said the winner. "That was the most important thing today."

Sampras is playing an unprecedented — for him — five-week stand on European indoor courts in hopes of accumulating enough points to stay No. 1. He won the title in Vienna a fortnight ago, after being granted entry courtesy of old rival Boris Becker, who gave a wild card to the American instead of taking it up himself.

Despite the loss, Sampras is assured of remaining on top of the ATP Tour rankings for the 24th week of his career on Monday.

The 27-year-old American started well against Krajicek in a battle of Wimbledon winners.

Krajicek, a Stuttgart finalist in 1997 before losing to Czech player Petr Korda,



Richard Krajicek from the Netherlands reacts after defeating Pete Sampras from the USA in their semi final at the Eurocard Open ATP tennis tournament in Stuttgart's Schleyer Hall Saturday October 31, 1998. Krajicek won by 6-7, 6-4 and 7-6 and reached the final on Sunday November 1, 1998 (AP Photo)

had to save a set point in the 10th game of the opening set as the inspired Sampras threatened.

But the battle of big serves went into a tiebreaker, where Sampras rolled out to a 5-2 lead.

A passing shot winner gave the American four set points and an untouchable cross-court forehand past Krajicek decided the first set.

The second stayed locked on serve with neither man ceding. Sampras briefly got in and out of trouble in the 10th game, saving two set points for Krajicek, the second with an ace.

But an unfortunate double-fault two points later gave the set to the

Dutchman and squared the match.

The third set again went to a tiebreaker, where Krajicek served an ace to hold three match points.

Sampras saved the first two but Krajicek caught the American out of position on the third and volleyed a winner into an empty court for victory.

"I just wasn't quite good enough," said Sampras. "I didn't put enough pressure on his service games. I played that bad service game in the second set (three double faults).

"His first and second serves are very powerful. He just seems to have the better nerve against me in the pivotal points."

The American also rued his lack of luck.

"I could have easily been sitting here after winning this match," he said. "I just got a little unlucky. There's no questions that when he's on, he's very devastating."

"He's got one of the bigger serves on Tour, it's frustrating. I never really got a hold of his second serve. He mixed it up well."

"He seems to play with no fear against me — he just goes for it."

"I felt I was playing very well this week and felt like I had a chance to win here. I thought I was going to break through and beat him today. I've been playing well all week. It's a tough one to take."

Ronaldo buys into Inter Milan

MILAN (AFP) — A year after Inter Milan bought Ronaldo, the Brazilian multi-millionaire is buying a stake in the Italian club.

Inter president Massimo Moratti, whose family control nearly 70 per cent of the shares, has announced a loss of nearly \$30 million and the arrival of an unexpected backer.

"I had a conversation with someone about Inter earlier today and he asked me if he could buy some shares in the club," Moratti told a shareholders' meeting here on Friday.

"I thought it was a nice thing to ask. And the man in question was Ronaldo."

Inter is a private company with few shareholders — club sponsor Pirelli has 13 per cent, another Milanese family 12 per cent and Inter's bankers five per cent. Small shareholders have only 0.5 per cent of the club.

"Given the difficulty in finding Inter shares available, I will sell him some of mine," the president said. He insisted the 22-year-old striker was making a sound investment.

Inter's dismal finances are only temporary, Moratti said, blaming the red balance sheet mainly on the European Court's 'Bosman ruling' in December 1995, which changed the way clubs keep their books.

Pre-Bosman, clubs could include the market value of players whose contracts were expiring, as a buyer would still have to pay them a transfer fee.

But by outlawing transfer fees on players whose contracts had expired, those assets vanished, and the court wiped hundreds of millions of dollars off the books of Europe's soccer clubs.

Moratti said that 24 billion of the 1997-98 season loss for the 1997-98 season was down to Bosman write-offs. But he insisted: "Ronaldo knows that he is making an excellent investment."

"From 1999 onwards, when the new TV rights contract with Telepiu starts, along with the new ones for European matches and the new sponsorship deals — Inter will be worth as much as Manchester United: 1.770 billion lira (over \$1 billion),"

Schumacher takes Japan pole

SUZUKA (AFP) — World championship contender Michael Schumacher got the edge on title leader Mika Hakkinen during Saturday's dramatic qualifying session for the decisive Japanese Grand Prix.

Schumacher put his Ferrari on pole position, but, despite a last-lap mistake, Hakkinen held the other front row spot in his McLaren-Mercedes.

The rivals were in a class of their own, even their teammates never looking as if they could challenge for the coveted front-row starting spots.

"I've felt confident all weekend," said Schumacher, who gained his 20th career pole and must finish five points clear of Hakkinen on Sunday to win his third world title.

"But there is no point in celebrating," Schumacher added. "It is tomorrow that is important."

Hakkinen was not the slightest downcast. "I suppose it's natural to be a bit disappointed," said the Finn, not looking disappointed but as relaxed as he has all weekend.

"Being second is not such a big problem. Of course, I would prefer to be on pole, but it doesn't give me any more pressure."

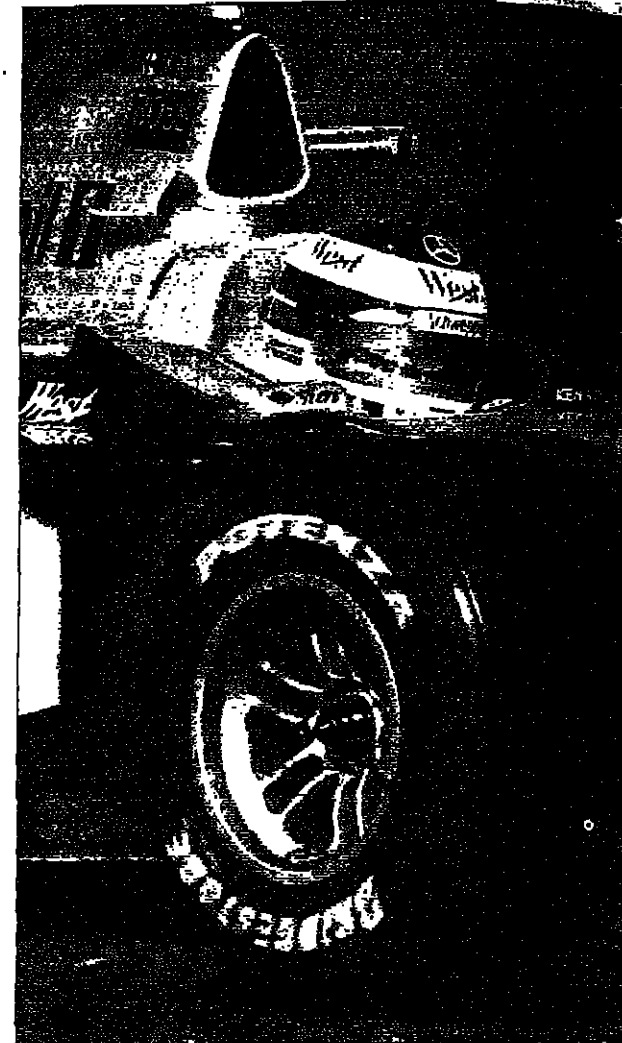
His final lap mistake did not trouble him. Hakkinen said, because it was a simple driving error which he could correct, not a mechanical problem.

Schumacher's pole time, set on his first run and improved on his second, was 1min 36.293secs at an average of 219.230kph.

Hakkinen was only 0.178sec slower, but both were one full second clear of Hakkinen's teammate David Coulthard, and more than 1.5 seconds up on Eddie Irvine in the second Ferrari.

To win his third title, Schumacher must win on Sunday, with Hakkinen no higher than third, or finish second with Hakkinen sixth or out of the points.

Hakkinen will win his first title if he finishes ahead of Schumacher, is second to a Schumacher victory, is fifth if Schumacher is second, or if both drivers retire.



Finland's Mika Hakkinen in action at the wheel of his McLaren-Mercedes during free practice for the Japanese Grand Prix at Suzuka, in central Japan. The race which will decide the 1998 F1 championships takes place Sunday (AP Photo)

from the race. Schumacher said that having Irvine "not too far" behind is encouraging.

"He had a problem with the car today and should go better tomorrow," said the German. "He may be in a position to get past Mika."

Hakkinen said he believed the warm, dry weather on Saturday was ideal for his Bridgestone tyres, and he hoped for the same conditions on Sunday.

McLaren boss Ron Dennis declared the team "very comfortable" with their grid position.

"This is probably the only race I have ever come to where coming second is as important as coming first," Dennis said. Mercedes racing chief Norbert Haug added that the team was in a better position than for the penultimate race at the Nurburgring a month ago, where Hakkinen comprehensively beat Schumacher.

Last year here, Irvine led the early stages of the race before handing the lead to Schumacher, who kept his title

chances alive until the infamous final race — where he collided with eventual champion Jacques Villeneuve.

Sunday will mark the Canadian's last race as reigning champion after a miserably uncompetitive year with the Williams-Mecachrome.

The two Williams will line-up on the third row with Heinz-Harald Frentzen ahead of Villeneuve despite going off the track on his final lap.

Villeneuve admitted he was "personally not very pleased with my (best qualifying) lap because I didn't get the best out of my car."

Schumacher's younger brother Ralf qualified seventh, marginally ahead of his Jordan teammate Damon Hill, who won his 1996 world title here.

Suzuka has been the scene of championship deciders five times in the recent past. The race starts at 1300 local time (0400GMT) and is scheduled for 53 laps. In fine weather it should last about 1hr 30min.

Drivers and Constructors standings

| Drivers | Points |
|--|------------|
| 1. Mika Hakkinen (Fin) McLaren Mercedes | 90 points |
| 2. Michael Schumacher (Ger) Ferrari | 86 |
| 3. David Coulthard (Gbr) McLaren Mercedes | 52 |
| 4. Eddie Irvine (Irl) Ferrari | 41 pts |
| 5. Jacques Villeneuve (Can) Williams-Mecachrome | 20 |
| 6. Alexander Wurz (Aut) Benetton-Mecachrome | 17 |
| 6= Damon Hill (Gbr) Jordan-Mugen Honda | 17 pts |
| 8. Giancarlo Fisichella (Ita) Benetton-Mecachrome | 16 pts |
| 9. Heinz-Harald Frentzen (Ger) Williams-Mecachrome | 15 |
| 10. Ralf Schumacher (Ger) Jordan-Mugen Honda | 14 |
| 11. Jean Alesi (Fra) Sauber-Petronas | 9 |
| 12. Rubens Barrichello (Bra) Stewart-Ford | 4 |
| 13= Mika Salo (Fin) Arrows | 3 |
| 13= Pedro Pablo Diniz (Bra) Arrows | 3 pts |
| 15= Johnny Herbert (Gbr) Sauber Petronas | 1 |
| 15= Jan Magnussen (Den) Stewart Ford | 1 |
| 15= Jarno Trulli (Ita) Prost-Peugeot | 1 |
| Constructors | Points |
| 1. McLaren-Mercedes | 142 points |
| 2. Ferrari | 127 pts |
| 3. Williams-Mecachrome | 35 pts |
| 4. Benetton-Mecachrome | 33 pts |
| 5. Jordan-Honda | 31 pts |
| 6. Sauber-Petronas | 10 pts |
| 7. Arrows | 6 pts |
| 8. Stewart-Ford | 5 pts |
| 9. Prost-Peugeot | 1 pt |

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAN HIRSCH

CAUGHT IN THE END

In a dramatic South seas... would have been to continue with a club, and all would have been well in declarer. On lead with the ace of clubs, East could do declarer no harm. Declarer would win any return, draw trumps, eliminate the diamonds with a ruff, then come to hand with a trump and lead a heart, taking one of the finesse. East can win, but then must either return a heart into dummy's tenace or allow South to get rid of a heart from hand by ending a club-ruff. West was made of either a ruff and at least two shifted to a heart. A lesser declarer would have tried a heart finesse, then later rolled on a second finesse in the suit — a combined 75 percent chance. But South found a line that was almost sure to succeed unless West had found a fiendish lead of the queen of clubs away from the ace, or hearts were 6-0.

South rose with the ace of hearts then drew trumps in two rounds. Now the diamonds were stopped by cashing the ace and king, and a ruff in a diamond on the table. With the groundwork complete, declarer led dummy's king of clubs. As expected, East won the ace, but was trapped in an endplay. Whether East returned a heart or some other suit, one heart and two clubs were all the defenders could get.

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Against routine defense, South would have been able to claim the first club contract rather quickly. But West's partner's ruffs in the trumps were using old-fashioned trump cases. North's pump to three trumps permitted North-South to reach game with a minimum of five.

West led the queen of clubs, failed in dummy as East signaled with the ace. Knee-jerk defense

Moenchengladbach lose 8-2

BONN (AFP) — Visiting Bayer Leverkusen humiliated bottom club Borussia Moenchengladbach 8-2 in Friday's Bundesliga clash — Ulf Kirsten scoring the visitors on their way with a superb first-half hat-trick.

Moenchengladbach stay on the bottom with just five points from ten matches.

In Friday's other match, Hansa Rostock let slip a 2-0 lead and crashed to a 3-2 defeat at Kaiserslautern.

Igor Pantic and Oliver Neuville had got Hansa off to a flying start with early goals and the visitors were 2-0 ahead after just 25 minutes.

But after the break the home side stormed back. Olaf Marschall scored from the spot five minutes into the second-half.

Michael Ballack equalised a quarter of an hour later. And then former Manchester City striker Uwe Roesler scored the winner in the 71st minute. It was his first goal since joining the club this season.

and Chiquinho.

Leverkusen's victory confirms them in third place with 19 points, one point behind 1860 Munich and six points behind Bayern Munich.

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Rubin upsets top seed

QUEBEC (AFP) — Chanda Rubin of the United States chalked up an upset when she beat top-seed Dominique Van Roost of Belgium in straight-sets to reach the semi-finals of the WTA tournament here.

Rubin scored a 6-2, 6-2 win.

Second-seed Sandrine Testud of France was another casualty. She crashed to American opponent Jan Chi 4-6, 5-7.

The other semi-finalists are seventh-seed Tara Snyder of the United States and eighth-seed Nathalie Dechy of France.

Snyder beat Catalina Cristea of Romania 6-4, 6-4 and Dechy defeated American Alexandra Stevenson 6-2, 7-6 (7/1).

| PHILADELPHIA 1 | PHILADELPHIA 2 | PLAZA | CONCORD | GALLERIA 1 | GALLERIA 2 | Hisham Yanes Theatre |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|----------------------------|
| Daniel Day-Lewis & Emily Watson... in THE BOXER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 | Liam Neeson & Jessica Lange... in ROB ROY Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 | Comedian Mohammad Huneidi... in SAEEDI AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 | CONCORD 11 ADDICTED TO LOVE Shows: 12:30, 3:30 THE GAME Shows: 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD 12 UP CLOSE & PERSONAL Shows: 3:30, 5:30 | ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Comedian Mohammad Huneidi... in SAEEDI AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 | ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Comedian Mohammad Huneidi... in SAEEDI AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:15, 10:30 | Watch out for the new play |

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Lionel Rouxel, of Racing Strasbourg is stopped by Germany's Uhlrich Rame, goalkeeper of Bordeaux during their first division match at the stadium de la Meinau. Strasbourg won 3-2 (AP Photo)

Connors to play Gomez in champions tennis final

TOKYO (AFP) — Defending champion Jimmy Connors took less than an hour to beat Mel Purcell in the Champions tennis Saturday.

The ever-green American tennis legend beat his compatriot 6-3, 6-1 in the semi-finals.

Connors joined the senior tennis tour in 1993, and has seen it grow to a 21-event world circuit, Tokyo being the 16th stop on the tour.

In the final of the \$150,000 tournament, Connors will take on 1990 French Open champion

Andres Gomez of Ecuador, who defeated American Tim Wilkison 6-4, 6-2.

"I'm going to have to be a little bit closer to avoid the balls coming too high, so I have to take the ball earlier than normal," the five-time U.S. Open champion said of the upcoming final against Gomez.

"I'm just going to play my game, try to hit the ball solid in the middle of the racket and make him hit a lot of balls. If he can control it and come up with right shots, then I can't do anything about that," he added.

Connors and Gomez have played 17 times on the senior tour with the American winning 12 of them, but he lost the last encounter at Boston in August.

"It was difficult to serve today," said Gomez. "It was strange. It was bright on one side and the other side was completely dark. I had some problems tracking the ball."

As for the final against Connors, Gomez said: "It doesn't matter. I lost to Jimmy last year. I'm just glad to be in the final."

Paralysed gymnast released from hospital

NEW YORK (AFP) — Chinese gymnast Sang Lan, the 17-year-old who was paralysed while practicing at the Goodwill Games, was released from Mount Sinai Hospital here on Friday vowing, "I shall never give in."

Sang was injured last July when she landed on her head during a practice vault before competition at the Goodwill Games. She remains hopeful despite doctors' predictions she will never walk again.

"I do not agree that I am paralyzed for the rest of my life," Sang said. "I shall never give in."

Sang's spirits were lifted during her stay by visits from actors Leonardo Di Caprio and Christopher Reeve, the latter a former "Superman" movie star who was paralysed in a horse-riding accident.

"Christopher Reeve said to me one day we would all stand up and walk again," Sang said. "I believe this day will come."

Sang has completed 13 weeks of rehabilitation therapy and will receive further treatment on an outpatient basis.

"Sang Lan has made excellent progress," said her doctor, Kristjan Ragnarsson.

"Although there has been no significant change in her neurological condition and both her hands and legs remain totally paralysed, Sang Lan's muscle strength has increased at both shoulders, elbows and wrists."

"She has made significant strides in self care and mobility skills, although she still requires assistance in many physical activities."

The Chinese vaulting champion has not missed a day of therapy and has been an example for others similarly afflicted.

"She showed herself to be highly motivated and hard working and she has been an inspiration for other patients and for the staff that worked with her," Ragnarsson said.

The staff has trained Sang's parents to help care for her and has trained Sang in how to take care of herself.

"I am learning everything from the very beginning," Sang said. "I am learning bathroom routines. I am learning to dress myself. I am learning to move from bed to wheelchair and wheelchair to bed. Everything so easy before has become very difficult to me now."

"I am most grateful everyone is trying to help me. I will not let them down. I will learn to take care of myself as soon as possible."

NBA talks must wait as more games vanish

NEW YORK (AFP) — National Basketball Association owners and players tentatively set their next bargaining session for Wednesday, by which time a fifth week of the season will be wiped out in a labour fight.

NBA officials said brief talks by telephone ended with both sides planning to spend the weekend reviewing proposals before lawyers talk again Monday, setting the stage for another face-to-face session.

"We agreed to take a few days off to catch our breath," said union spokesman Dan Wasserman. "Both of us want to take stock and look at the numbers."

The number mattering most to fans is 15. That's about how many games each club has had wiped off the schedule. In all, 194 games have been lost so far with another 50 more likely gone before talks resume here.

With NBA officials saying last Wednesday that every week which passes can be taken to mean another lost week of the season, fans can now expect a season truncated to 67 games or less.

Among the games already wiped out were Chicago trips to Utah, in a rematch of June's NBA finals, plus Houston and San Antonio.

While NBA Commissioner David Stern said games might be added back if a season even begins, bickering on how to divide a \$1.7 billion empire is turning U.S. hoop fans' interest to college games.

Talks have clarified the positions for

both sides. Owners have offered a 50-50 revenue split with players, seven per cent less than they now receive.

Players have said they will accept a 60-40 revenue split, giving them the lion's share and slightly more than they had last season.

In financial terms, the percentage difference equates to \$200 million, a wide gap that has been the core problem since owners first locked out players July 1 to begin the standoff.

"There is still a pretty wide gap," Stern said. "At least we have identified the size of the gaps. Now it's mostly about some very difficult bridges we have to cross, and we may or not be able to."

The sides have agreed on a framework that would link a two-year luxury tax to the salary cap exception that allows clubs to re-sign their players without regard to the salary cap.

Tax money would go to clubs with the lowest incomes. If the system did not stem rising salaries, a modified cap would begin with players putting 10 per cent of salaries into an escrow fund.

The major hangup is at what point the tax would kick in. Players want \$18 million, a level that would hit only union president Patrick Ewing.

Owners want a tax to start at the NBA average of \$2.6 million and want it to range from 50 to 200 per cent of salaries, hoping this will keep owners from spending themselves into debt for top talent.

What players and fans fear is a two-

class system in which a few rich clubs pay lavish salaries to stars and become so mighty that rivals, even with financial help, cannot assemble competitive squads.

Talks this week were sparked by a confrontation between Michael Jordan, whose future playing status remains uncertain until the labor fight is over, and Washington owner Abe Pollin.

Jordan wondered how owners could plead poverty without opening their books. Pollin argued for trust, stirring an unhappy response by players during which Jordan suggested any owner who could not make a profit with an NBA club should sell it.

NBA owners will be paid \$660 million during this season from television network deals signed last year with NBC and Ted Turner's TNT. If no games are played this season, the networks pay nothing in the final year of the contract.

The networks' support of the owners has prompted players to boycott NBC reporters for such routine things as feature stories and post-game comments.

"When all is said and done, the lock-out will have cost the players a lot of money and NBC's role will not be forgotten," Ewing said.

NBC's first scheduled telecast is Chicago against New York on Christmas. If network executives were to exert pressure, it might speed a contract deal. But at the moment their losses are minimal.

Tyson set for January comeback

LAS VEGAS (AFP) — Mike Tyson will make his return to boxing in January, most likely here at the MGM Grand with South Africa's Frans Botha, American Vaughn Bean and German Axel Schulz possible opponents.

"He's going to fight in January. We're looking at Las Vegas," said Shelly Finkel, an advisor to the ex-champion since his split from promoter Don King.

Tyson was reinstated here on October 19 by the Nevada State Athletic Commission, which banished him last year for biting Evander Holyfield during a world title bout.

The MGM Grand, wary of Tyson after a casino disturbance followed the "Bite Fight," reportedly wants Tyson there on January 16, one week before a scheduled George Foreman-Larry Holmes matchup in Houston.

Signing a fight deal with MGM could give Tyson the money he needs to satisfy tax problems, including a lien on his Connecticut home.

Tyson and his wife Monica spend most of their time in a suburban Washington home.

Deciding upon who will be the opponent will be the toughest call. Bean was beaten by Holyfield in September in the

World Boxing Association (WBA) and International Boxing Federation (IBF) champion's most recent defence.

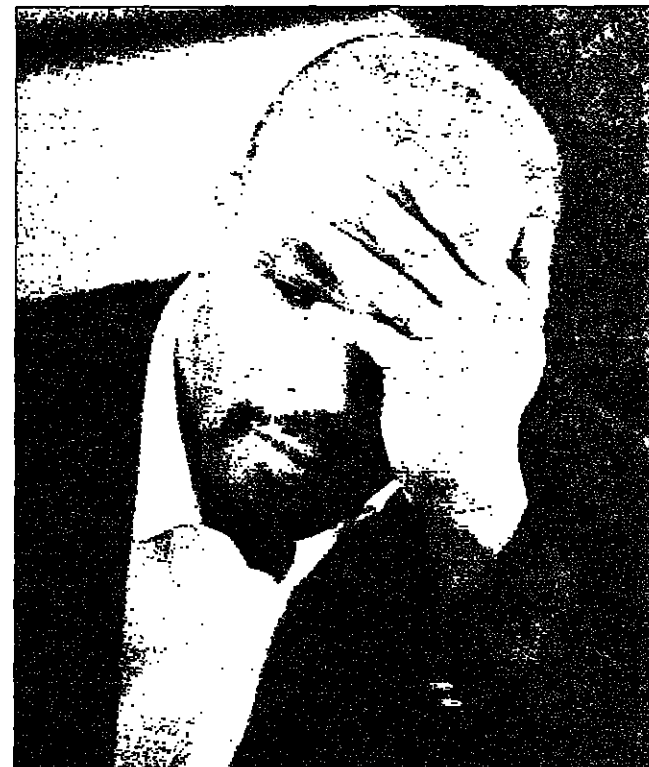
Botha has a fight in Atlantic City on the Prince Naseem Hamed undercard this weekend but will pull out if he signs a deal with Tyson before the bout.

Botha's status is in jeopardy because Don King claims to have a promotional right to the South African, just as he claims to have rights to Tyson. King and Tyson are trading challenges.

King is also reportedly the major roadblock in final confirmation of a March 13 heavyweight unification fight in New York between Holyfield and Britain's Lennox Lewis, the World Boxing Council (WBC) champion.

King slipped a clause into their contract giving him promotional rights for the next three fights of whoever wins that bout, following in a tradition that has sustained King's reign while champions have come and gone.

But Holyfield wants so much to fight Lewis that he is threatening to break with King if that clause becomes an impediment to making a fight with Lewis.



Mike Tyson

Sampras has a lot to lose

PARIS (AFP) — Pete Sampras arrives in the French capital for next week's lucrative Paris Indoor Open knowing that he has everything to lose as he continues his bid to become the first player in history to top the rankings for a sixth consecutive year.

The 27-year-old American, who will be defending the title he won last year and also the bonus points he pocketed then, knows that his world standing is still under serious threat from rivals Marcelo Rios and Pat Rafter.

And although the fast indoor surface inside the grass-walled Bercy Stadium will suit the American — the competition will be rife with 19 of the world's top twenty ranked players taking part in the event.

Sampras, who like all sixteen seeds has a first-round bye, will face a first match against either the dangerous 21st-ranked Swede Thomas Johansson or home hope Sebastian Grosjean.

Rios, who has twice briefly taken over the No. 1 spot from Sampras this season, is hoping to be fully recovered from the hip injury which forced him to retire in the quarter-finals at Stuttgart on Friday.

The 22-year-old Chilean, who has briefly displaced Sampras at the top of the ATP Tour rankings twice so far this year, hurt a hip muscle while playing football with a tennis ball.

"I pulled a muscle. It is a new injury — not the one I had in Munich earlier in the month when I hurt my back," he said, adding that he had not wanted to aggravate the injury in Germany.

"If I had gone out to play it would be worse. I preferred to rest and let it get better for next week."

Rios appeared to be given the easiest ride of the favourites at Friday's draw. In the first round he plays either Bohdan Ulihrach of the Czech Republic or a qualifier with the most dangerous opponents in his quarter appearing to be eighth-seeded Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia or ninth-seeded Tim Henman of Britain.

Rafter, by contrast, was handed no favours. The Australian, who complained of being "mentally drained" in Stuttgart after his loss to big-serving British player Greg Rusedski, will have a tough first match against either semi-retired but ever dangerous three-times tournament winner Boris

Becker or Frenchman Nicolas Escude. And if he can come safely through that test he will probably have another difficult clash against either fourteenth-seeded Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia or American 'serve-and-volley' exponent Todd Martin.

Henman's first opponent will be either Richard Fromberg of Australia or Arnaud Di Pasquale of France, while his thirteenth-seeded compatriot Rusedski plays either Nicolas Kiefer of Germany or a qualifier.

Fifth-seed Andre Agassi, who has shot back up to fifth in the rankings after slumping to 140th last year, will face either 1996 Bercy champion Thomas Enqvist of Sweden or a qualifier.

Seeds: 1. Pete Sampras (USA), 2. Marcelo Rios (Chi), 3. Patrick Rafter (Aus), 4. Carlos Moya (Spa), 5. Andre Agassi (USA), 6. Alex Corretja (Spa), 7. Karol Kucera (Svk), 8. Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Rus), 9. Tim Henman (Gbr), 10. Petr Korda (Cze), 11. Richard Krajicek (Ned), 12. Jonas Bjorkman (Swe), 13. Greg Rusedski (Gbr), 14. Goran Ivanisevic (Cro), 15. Jan Siemerink (Ned), 16. Albert Costa (Spa).

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Algeria presidential poll set for April

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algeria will hold a presidential election in April 1999 and not in February as announced last month, opposition sources told AFP on Saturday.

President Liamine Zeroual, elected for a five-year mandate in November 1995, announced on Sept. 11 that early polls would be held by the end of February 1999 and that he would not stand for another term.

In a letter sent to political parties on Saturday however, Zeroual said the poll "will take place in the month of April" without further specifying a date, according to a source from the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD).

Zeroual was to address the Algerian people Saturday night in a televised speech to mark the anniversary of the November 1954 revolution that triggered Algeria's bloody war for independence from France.

The decision to postpone the election came after Algerian political parties protested they did not have enough time to put together candidate lists and organise the vote after Zeroual's surprise decision.

The RCD went so far as to ask Zeroual to change his mind and finish his term, which was to finish at the end of 2000.

Two months after Zeroual's announcement, none of the parties has officially nominated a candidate. The Islamist party Movement of Society for Peace had asked its president Mahfoud Nahmah if he would run, but did not yet have his response.

The postponement came as Algeria's bloodshed continued.

Zeroual's initial announcement provoked a wave of violence by Islamists trying to overthrow the government.

The unrest ranged from throat-slittings to a deadly homemade bomb blast that ripped through a western Algerian marketplace, killing at least 30 people and injuring more than 100 on Sept. 19.

In the latest attack, six civilians had their throats cut by suspected armed Islamists in the Algerian region of Medea.

Algeria has been racked by violence since 1992

French leaders appeal for press freedom in Algeria

PARIS (R) — A group of senior French politicians and intellectuals said on Saturday freedom of the press in Algeria was under threat and had to be protected.

"The independent press is in danger," the group wrote in a letter to influential daily newspaper Le Monde.

Among the seven signatories were former Socialist Prime Minister Michel Rocard, former centre-right Finance Minister Alain Madelin, senior Green party member Daniel Cohn-Bendit and the writer Bernard-Henri Levy.

The seven sent their protest following a decision earlier this month by state-run printing houses in Algeria to stop printing the four main non-government dailies unless they paid their debts immediately.

Three other independent newspapers have gone on strike in support of the big four. Editors and unions say the debt was a pretext used by the government to stifle freedom of the press.

The seven senior French figures heaped praise on Algeria's independent press for carrying on working in recent years in extremely dangerous conditions.

"It has not given up in the face of Islamic terror...and has held strong in the face of reprisals and blackmail from the powers that be," they wrote. "It is up to us not to abandon shamefully this fragile victory."

when the military-backed regime cancelled elections that the now-outlawed Islamic Salvation Front had been poised to win.

Bloody attacks have claimed more than 70,000

lives, civilian and military, since 1992, according to estimates by western observers.

The official casualty toll in Algeria stands at around 25,000.



IRAQI REFUGEES: An Iraqi woman sells domestic goods on a pavement in Amman on Saturday. Tens of thousands of Iraqis have fled their country since sanctions were imposed eight years ago for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Iraq announced on Saturday it was stopping all cooperation with U.N. weapons inspectors charged under the ceasefire terms of the 1991 Gulf war with dismantling Baghdad's weapons of mass destruction. The sanctions cannot be lifted until the inspectors declare their work complete (Reuters photo)

Turkey warns Armenia of sheltering PKK leader Ocalan

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey warned Armenia of "extremely serious consequences" if it gave refuge to a Kurdish separatist leader whom the Turkish government is seeking to extradite, press reports said Saturday.

Turkish officials asked Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov to convey the warning to Armenian authorities, given that Ankara does not have direct diplomatic relations with the former Soviet Republic.

According to several Turkish papers, the Turkish

government promised that it would ensure that Armenia was "cut off" from the outside world should it shelter Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK).

Ocalan has been at the centre of mounting tension between Turkey and Syria, whom Ankara accused of providing the separatist movement with backing.

Under threats of military action from the Turkish government, Syria expelled Ocalan who then fled to Russia, according to Ankara.

Car bomb explodes at Palestinian camp in southern Lebanon

SIDON (Agencies) — A car bomb exploded on Saturday at a Palestinian refugee camp near the southern city of Sidon, which has witnessed a flare-up of violence this week, a security source said.

He said no one was hurt when the bomb blew up at dawn, gutting the car of Khaled Kuriyeh, a member of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's mainstream Fatah faction.

The vehicle was parked at Ain Al Hilweh, Lebanon's largest Palestinian refugee camp. There are some 356,000 Palestinian refugees living among Lebanon's 3.5 million people.

No one claimed responsibility for the blast but security sources said it was probably related to last week's signing of a Middle East interim peace accord between Israel and the Palestinians which has led to a crackdown on Palestinian activists.

Earlier this week, the Lebanese army and police tightened security in Sidon after two policemen were

cooperation with UNSCOM and its chief and stop all its activities in Iraq, including the "monitoring operations" as from today.

"This decision does not concern the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) which can continue its activities... on condition that they are totally independent from those of UNSCOM."

"This decision will remain until the [U.N.] Security Council examines positively and honestly Iraq's right to a lifting of the embargo and until it takes firm decisions by giving UNSCOM chief Richard Butler and proceeds with a restructuring of this body to make it an international, impartial and professional institution, far from spying and American agents."

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Iraq, Syria to improve trade ties

BAGHDAD (R) — Syrian Industry Minister Ahmad Nezzamuddin arrived in Baghdad on Saturday for talks on expanding economic cooperation between the two countries.

"We came here to take part in the new session of the Baghdad International Fair and to discuss means of expanding economic and trade cooperation with Iraq," the Syrian minister said.

Baghdad and Damascus, ruled by rival factions of the Arab Baath Party, cut their ties because of tension over the 1980-88 Iraq-Iran war in which Syria backed Iran.

Relations have been improving since last year when both countries agreed to

reopen their borders to encourage the flow of Syrian goods under Iraq's oil-for-food deal with the United Nations.

The deal, which began in December 1996, now allows Iraq to sell \$5.25 billion worth of oil every six months. It can use the proceeds to buy food and medicines for Iraqis suffering from the effects of U.N. sanctions imposed on Baghdad after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Officials from the two countries have said steps are under way to reopen their embassies, closed for the past two decades.

Iraq's Trade Minister Mohammad Mehdi Saleh had earlier said trade between the

two countries was worth \$150 million in 1997 and was expected to reach the same level this year.

Syrian traders are becoming a common sight in Baghdad and the display of Syrian confectionery, detergent and canned food in the capital's shops is evidence of their improving trade.

In July, the two countries signed an agreement in Damascus to reopen a pipeline between Iraq's Kirkuk oilfield and the Syrian port of Banias.

Iraqi Oil Minister Amir Mohammad Rasheed agreed in Baghdad in August with his Syrian counterpart on a schedule to pump oil via the pipeline, closed since 1982.

Skeletons, human organs for sale on Halloween

CHICAGO (R) — Still looking to add some fright to your Halloween night? All you need you might get at the Anatomical Chart Co., Illinois, that sells more skeletons — 30,000 a year, both genuine and plastic — than any other firm in the world. Not surprisingly, Halloween is the peak season for skeletons. Sales jump 40 per cent, company president said. Cordell offers some special items, including solid milk chocolate brains, anatomically correct chocolate hearts and chocolate ears.

Origin of vampire myths might be a disfiguring disease

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Wayne Tikkanen, a professor of chemistry at California State University, believes that the European vampire myths were the result of a disfiguring blood disease known as porphyria. As porphyria symptoms worsen, the skin begins to blacken and rupture in the sun. Abnormal amounts of hair grow in the scars. Burned lips peel back making the teeth more prominent, the nose erodes and in some cases the fingers disintegrate, making the hands resemble paws. Some afflicted with the disease centuries ago may have drunk animal blood to relieve their pain as a folk remedy. Now treatable, people with porphyria can lead normal lives with medication. The disease affects one out of 100,000 people.

Don't share name of cartoon family

PARIS (R) — A court thrown a request for nine million francs (\$1.6 million) damages from a Frenchwoman who said her life was a misery because she shared the same name as a family of grotesque cartoon characters.

Bidochoe sought damages from Christian Bine, author of the highly popular "Bidochoe Family" cartoon strip. The strip features a lower middle class retired couple complete with outlandish berets, outlandish "thick slippers and a mangy dog. The court dismissed the case, saying there was no direct parallel between the real and fictional Bidochoes.

Sex assailant admits stupid mistake

BELOIT (R) — It may go down in legal annals as the Clinton defence. A Wisconsin teenager charged with sexual assault says he made a stupid mistake when aroused by a discussion of President Bill Clinton's affair with former intern Monica Lewinsky, police said. In the untold 15-year-old boy's version of the Oct. 19 incident, he became excited when he and a 14-year-old girl were in the library stacks discussing Clinton and Lewinsky's alleged trysts and he made a "stupid statement" about having a condom and may have brushed up against her. "The boy said he may have had a 'moment of weakness' but didn't remember touching the girl in an inappropriate manner," the police report said.

Shaved haircut cheers Queen Elizabeth II

LONDON (AP) — In times of change for the monarchy, it must be reassuring to the royals that somebody is loyal enough to shave the queen's initials onto his head. Doo-jockey Andrew Hendricks said Queen Elizabeth II laughed out loud when she saw "ER2" — the "ER" stands for Elizabeth Regina, the queen's name in Latin — shaved onto the back of his head Friday. "She didn't see it at first, but when she did she laughed out loud and spun me round by my shoulder to show the Duke of Edinburgh," Hendricks said.

Israel arrests two Pal in settler kill

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli security forces arrested two Palestinians in connection with the killing of a Jewish settler in the West Bank village of Ma'ar al-Najm. They said Mahmoud Dahab and a woman, near the West Bank village, were not available for questioning. The settlement of Ma'ar al-Najm was shot dead in April. Settlers said the shooting was the result of a long-running feud between the settlers and Palestinian shepherds and the

Jordan in Kingdo

Amman (R) — The Jordanian government has announced that it will be holding a series of talks with the Syrian government to improve trade ties between the two countries. The talks are expected to take place in Amman in the coming weeks.

Car bomb explodes at Palestinian camp in southern Lebanon

Sidon (R) — A car bomb exploded on Saturday at a Palestinian refugee camp near the southern city of Sidon, which has witnessed a flare-up of violence this week, a security source said.

French leaders appeal for press freedom in Algeria

Paris (R) — A group of senior French politicians and intellectuals said on Saturday freedom of the press in Algeria was under threat and had to be protected.

Algeria presidential poll set for April

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Turkey warns Armenia of sheltering PKK leader Ocalan

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